

Abn 9248

523

MACMILLAN ANTHOLOGIES
OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

General Editors:

A. Norman Jeffares, formerly Professor of English,
University of Stirling
Michael Alexander, Berry Professor of English Literature,
University of St Andrews

Mustafa

0669

01123627156

PERPUSTAKAAN SULTAN ABDUL SAMAD
Perkhidmatan Pembekalan Dokumen
Document Delivery Service

Tarikh Pemulangan / Due Date :

27 OCT 2015

DIBENARKAN UNTUK DIBAWA KELUAR
Tandatangan & Cop:

Perkhidmatan Pembekalan Dokumen
Perpustakaan Sultan Abdul Samad
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 UPM Serdang

[Signature]

Tarikh: 13/10/15

Sila pulangkan bahan di Bahagian
Pengurusan Maklumat. Denda lewat
pemulangan / kerosakan bahan yang
dipinjam akan ditanggung sendiri oleh
peminat

Please return book/books to the
Information Management Division
Requestors will pay overdue fines / etc.

MACMILLAN ANTHOLOGIES
OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

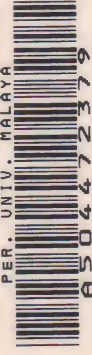
Volume 1 THE MIDDLE AGES (700–1550)
Michael Alexander and Felicity Riddy

Volume 2 THE RENAISSANCE (1550–1660)
Gordon Campbell

Volume 3 THE RESTORATION AND
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1660–1798)
Ian McGowan

Volume 4 THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1798–1900)
Brian Martin

Volume 5 THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900–present)
Neil McEwan



MACMILLAN ANTHOLOGIES
OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE RESTORATION AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Edited by
Ian McGowan

M
MACMILLAN

Selection and editorial matter © Ian McGowan 1989
 All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission
 of this publication may be made without written permission.
 No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied
 or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance
 with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956 (as amended),
 or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying
 issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 33-4 Alfred Place,
 London WC1E 7DP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to
 this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and
 civil claims for damages.

First published 1989

Published by
 MACMILLAN EDUCATION LTD
 Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS
 and London

Companies and representatives
 throughout the world

Typeset by Wessex Typesetters
 (Division of The Eastern Press Ltd)
 Frome, Somerset

Printed in Hong Kong

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
 Macmillan anthologies of English literature

Vol. 3: The Restoration and eighteenth century

1. English literature—Anthologies

I. McGowan, Ian

820.8

ISBN 0-333-39271-X

ISBN 0-333-46478-8 Pbk

PR 1109

Mac

Contents

Acknowledgements	xii
General Introduction	xiii
Introduction: The Restoration and Eighteenth Century	xv
Note on Annotation and Glossing	xxviii
Note on Dates	xxviii
SAMUEL BUTLER	1
From <i>Hudibras</i>	
[The Character of the Hero]	1
JOHN AUBREY	8
From <i>Brief Lives</i>	
William Shakespeare	8
JOHN BUNYAN	10
From <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i>	
[Christian in Vanity Fair]	10
JOHN DRYDEN	18
<i>Absalom and Achitophel</i>	19
<i>Mac Flecknoe</i>	45
To the Memory of Mr Oldham	51
A Song for St Cecilia's Day, 1687	52
Lines on Milton	54
To My Honour'd Kinsman John Driden	55
From <i>An Essay of Dramatic Poesy</i>	
[Shakespeare and Ben Jonson Compared]	60
From <i>Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy</i>	
[Shakespeare's Language]	62
From Preface to <i>Ovid's Epistles</i>	
[Translation]	63
From <i>Discourse concerning Satire</i>	
From Preface to <i>Fables Ancient and Modern</i>	64
[Chaucer]	65
SAMUEL PEPYS	67
From <i>Diary</i>	
[The Great Fire of London]	67

THOMAS SPRAT From <i>The History of the Royal Society</i> [The Prose Style Sought by the Royal Society]	72	[A Cheerful Dunce?]	166
[Prospects of Scientific Discovery]	72	[The Status of Actors]	168
JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER <i>Satire</i> , Were I (who to my cost already am)	76	SIR RICHARD STEELE <i>The Spectator</i> , No. 2 [The Club]	171
WILLIAM DAMPIER From <i>A New Voyage Round the World</i> [Australian Natives]	76	JOSEPH ADDISON <i>The Spectator</i> , No 70 [The Ballad]	172
DANIEL DEFOE From <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> [Shipwreck]	83	<i>The Spectator</i> , No 74 [The Ballad, continued]	171
[Spiritual Awakening]	85	JOHN GAY From <i>The Beggar's Opera</i> Act I	176
From <i>Moll Flanders</i> [Temptation]	85	ALEXANDER POPE From <i>An Essay on Criticism</i> [Poetic Technique]	181
JONATHAN SWIFT From <i>A Tale of a Tub</i> [History of Christianity]	89	From <i>Windsor Forest</i> [Order in Variety]	187
A Description of the Morning	93	[Man's Victims]	205
A Description of a City Shower	98	<i>The Rape of the Lock</i>	206
From <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	99	Epistle to Miss Blount	207
[Gulliver arrives in Lilliput]	108	From <i>Eloisa to Abelard</i>	208
[Gulliver in Brobdingnag]	108	From <i>Epistle II. To a Lady: Of the Characters of Women</i>	209
[Gulliver praises England to the King]	110	<i>Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot</i>	230
[The Immortals of Luggnagg]	116	LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU From <i>Letters</i>	232
[Houyhnhnms and Yahoos]	119	[Turkish Women]	236
[Return to Civilisation?]	122	[Inoculation against Smallpox]	244
[Gulliver's Doubts]	128	[Female Society in Turkey]	256
<i>A Modest Proposal</i>	132	[Female Education]	259
A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed	136	SAMUEL RICHARDSON From <i>Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded</i> [An Attack]	260
From <i>Verses on the Death of Dr Swift</i>	137	PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, EARL OF CHESTERFIELD From <i>Letters to his Natural Son</i> [Polite Behaviour]	265
WILLIAM CONGREVE From <i>The Way of the World</i> [Marriage Conditions]	145	[How to Please People]	269
COLLEY CIBBER From <i>An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber</i>	147	[Social Accomplishments]	279
	156		281
	166		284

JAMES THOMSON	287
<i>The Seasons</i>	
From <i>Summer</i>	287
From <i>Winter</i>	290
From <i>The Castle of Indolence</i>	293
[The Land of Drowsyhed]	295
HENRY FIELDING	
From <i>Shamela</i>	295
[True Confessions]	
From <i>Joseph Andrews</i>	298
[Good Neighbours]	
From <i>Tom Jones</i>	
[Caught in the Act]	304
SAMUEL JOHNSON	310
<i>The Vanity of Human Wishes</i>	311
<i>The Rambler</i> , No 4	
[Morality in Fiction]	321
From Preface to <i>A Dictionary of the English Language</i>	325
From <i>Rasselas</i>	
A Dissertation on the Art of Flying	329
A Dissertation upon Poetry	332
From Preface to Edition of Shakespeare	334
From General Note on <i>King Lear</i>	343
From <i>A Journey to the Western Islands</i>	
[Highland Scenery]	344
From <i>Letters</i>	
To Earl of Chesterfield	346
To James Macpherson	347
To Revd William Dodd	347
From <i>Prayers and Meditations</i>	
September 1764	348
Easter 1777	348
From <i>The Lives of the Poets</i>	
[The Metaphysical Poets]	349
[Milton's Politics]	352
[<i>Lycidas</i>]	352
[<i>Paradise Lost</i>]	353
[Pope and Dryden Compared]	360
[Gray's Poetry]	364

To Sir John Lade, on his Coming of Age	367
On the Death of Dr Robert Levet	368
LAURENCE STERNE	370
From <i>Tristram Shandy</i>	
[Begetting]	370
[Time and Distance]	374
[Hobby-Horse]	375
From <i>A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy</i>	
Paris	379
THOMAS GRAY	384
Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College	384
Sonnet on the Death of Mr Richard West	387
Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat	388
<i>Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard</i>	389
The Bard. A Pindaric Ode	394
From <i>Journal in the Lake District</i> , 1769	398
HORACE WALPOLE,	
EARL OF ORFORD	401
From <i>Letters</i>	
[Pomp and Piety]	401
[Wild Nature]	403
[Burial of King George II]	404
TOBIAS SMOLLETT	407
From <i>The Expedition of Humphry Clinker</i>	
[The Pleasures of Bath and London]	407
[A Domestic Epistle]	413
CHRISTOPHER SMART	415
From <i>Jubilate Agno</i>	
[My Cat Jeoffry]	415
From <i>A Song to David</i>	
[God's Creation]	418
[Adoration]	420
ADAM SMITH	428
From <i>The Wealth of Nations</i>	
[The Division of Labour]	428

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS	430
From <i>Discourses on Art</i> , No 3	
[Nature and the Grand Style]	430
From <i>Discourses on Art</i> , No 7	
[Nature and Taste]	433
From <i>Discourses on Art</i> , No 11	
[Genius in Art]	434
EDMUND BURKE	437
From <i>Philosophical Enquiry into the</i> <i>Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime</i> <i>and Beautiful</i>	
Of the Sublime	437
[Terror, Obscurity, Power]	438
Sublime and Beautiful Compared	445
[Reality, Words, Passions]	446
OLIVER GOLDSMITH	449
An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog	449
Song. When lovely woman stoops to folly	450
<i>The Deserted Village</i>	451
From <i>Retaliation</i>	
[David Garrick]	461
WILLIAM COWPER	463
From <i>The Task</i>	
[Pleasure in Nature]	463
[A Harsher Scene]	465
The Winter Walk at Noon	466
The Castaway	467
JAMES MACPHERSON	470
From <i>Fingal. An Ancient Epic Poem</i>	
[Battle is joined]	470
EDWARD GIBBON	474
From <i>Memoirs of My Life</i>	
[Gibbon at Oxford]	474
[Gibbon in Love]	479
From <i>Decline and Fall of the Roman</i> <i>Empire</i>	
General Observations on the Fall	480
JAMES BOSWELL	488
From <i>London Journal, 1762-1763</i>	
['A Man of Pleasure']	489

From <i>The Life of Johnson</i>	493
[A Potential Explosion]	502
HENRY MACKENZIE	
From <i>The Man of Feeling</i>	502
[Harley visits a Madhouse]	504
ROBERT FERGUSON	504
The Daft-Days	506
From <i>Auld Reikie. A Poem</i>	
To the Principal and Professors of St Andrews	509
RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN	512
From <i>The School for Scandal</i>	
[Discoveries]	512
FANNY BURNAY	524
From <i>Diary</i>	
[Chased by the King]	524
GEORGE CRABBE	530
From <i>The Village</i>	
[Pastoral?]	530
[Rural Life]	533
<i>Peter Grimes</i>	535
ROBERT BURNS	544
Holy Willie's Prayer	544
To a Louse	547
<i>Tam o'Shanter. A Tale</i>	549
Song. Ae Fond Kiss	555
Song. A Red Red Rose	556
Song. For a' that and a' that	557
WILLIAM BECKFORD	559
From <i>Vathek</i>	
[Sacrifice to the Giaour]	559
MATTHEW LEWIS	564
From <i>The Monk</i>	
[The Invocation of Lucifer]	564
[The Prisoner in the Sepulchre]	567
JANE AUSTEN	571
From <i>Love and Friendship</i>	571
Bibliography	576
Index of First Lines	580
Index of Authors	582
Source List	583

Acknowledgements

For support and encouragement I owe thanks to my mother, Helena Burgoyne, Felicity Riddy and Felicity McGowan; and for typing to Mamie Prentice and Yvonne McClymont.

IMcG

The author and publishers wish to thank the following publishers for permission to use copyright material: John Aubrey, for an extract from *Brief Lives*, ed. A. Powell (Cresset Press, 1949), pp. 52–3, by permission of Century Hutchinson; James Boswell, for an extract from *Boswell's London Journal 1762–1763*, ed. F. A. Pottle (1950), pp. 135–41, *The Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell*, by permission of William Heinemann and Yale University; William Congreve, for an extract from *The Way of the World*, ed. Gibbons (1971), pp. 72–82, New Mermaid Edition. Copyright © Ernest Benn Ltd, by permission of A. & C. Black; William Dampier, for an extract from *The Scientific Background*, eds A. N. Jeffares and M. B. Davies (1958), pp. 194–6, by permission of Pitman Publishing; Edward Gibbon, for extracts from Edward Gibbon manuscripts included in *Memoirs of My Life*, ed. G. A. Bonnard (Nelson, 1966), by permission of John Murray; Samuel Johnson, for extracts from *Diaries, Prayers, and Annals*, ed. W. L. McAdam, Jr, with Donald and Mary Hyde (1958), pp. 81–2, 264, by permission of Yale University Press; Samuel Pepys, for extracts from *The Diary of Samuel Pepys Vol. VII*, eds R. Latham and W. Matthews (G. Bell, 1972), pp. 267–72, 276–7, by permission of Unwin Hyman; Alexander Pope, for extracts from *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. J. Butt (1963), by permission of Methuen & Co.; Joshua Reynolds, for extracts from *Discourses on Art*, ed. R. R. Wark (1959, 1975), pp. 42–5, 123–5, 191–3, by permission of Yale University Press; Adam Smith, for an extract from *The Scientific Background*, eds A. N. Jeffares and M. B. Davies (1958), pp. 130–1, by permission of Pitman Publishing; Thomas Sprat, for an extract from *The Scientific Background*, eds A. N. Jeffares and M. B. Davies (1958), p. 22, by permission of Pitman Publishing.

Every effort has been made to trace all the copyright holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publisher will be pleased to make the necessary arrangement at the first opportunity.

General Introduction

There can often be a gulf between the restricted reading required by a school, college or university syllabus and the great expanse of English literature which is there to be explored and enjoyed. There are two effective ways of bridging that gulf. One is to be aware of how authors relate or have related to their contemporary situations and their contemporaries, how they accept, develop or react against what has been written by their predecessors or older contemporaries, how, in short, they fit into the long history of English literature. Good histories of literature – and there is a welcome increase of interest in them – serve to place authors in their contexts, as well as giving a panoramic view of their careers.

The second way is to sample their work, to discover the kind or kinds of writing they have produced. Here is where the anthology contributes to an enjoyment of reading. It conveys the flavour of an author as nothing but reading that author can. And when an author is compared to his or her fellow writers – a thing a good anthology facilitates – the reader gains several extra dimensions, not least an insight into what thoughts, what fears, what delights have occupied writers at different times. To gain such insights is to see, among other things, the relevance of past authors to the present, to the reader. Reading an anthology shows something of the vast range of our literature, its variety of form and outlook, of mood and expression, from black despair to ecstatic happiness; it is an expansive experience widening our horizons, enhancing specialised study, but also conveying its own particular pleasures, the joy of finding familiar pieces among unfamiliar, of reacting to fresh stimuli, of reaching new conclusions about authors, in short, of making literature a part of oneself.

Anthologies also play a large part in the life of a literature. If we are the beneficiaries of our literary inheritance, we are also trustees for it, and the maintenance of the inheritance for future generations requires new selections of properly edited texts. The Macmillan Literary Anthologies, which have followed on from the Macmillan Histories of Literature, are designed to present these texts with the essential pertinent information. The selection made of poetry, prose and plays has been wide and inclusive, authors appear in the order of

their dates of birth, texts – with the exception of the Middle English section – are modernised and footnotes are kept to a minimum. A broadly representative policy has been the aim of the general editors, who have maintained a similar format and proportion in each volume, though the medieval volume has required more annotation.

MJA
ANJ

Introduction: The Restoration and Eighteenth Century

Literary and political histories traditionally take the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 as a convenient starting point; but that event marked neither a turning-back of the clock nor an abrupt break with the nation's past, as elements of the old coexisted with the new in the social and intellectual spheres. In 1798 Britain remained a mainly agricultural society. Its population had, however, doubled during the previous 150 years to about 9 million; London, always the largest and most influential concentration, was nearing 1 million, ten times the size of any rival city. But shifts in the economic life of the country, partly brought about by foreign trade, economic 'improvements' and growing industrialisation, had led to five English cities having populations over 50,000. These were Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol and Leeds – trading ports of the West, and manufacturing towns of the Midlands and North, which had outstripped traditional centres such as Norwich, York or Oxford.

The Restoration of Charles II was hailed as bringing stability after the political, economic and religious tensions of the earlier seventeenth century, which had led to the Civil War (1642–8), the execution of Charles I, and the Cromwellian Protectorate. Within three decades, however, renewed struggles had forced the flight of the Catholic James II, in 1688, ahead of the accession of the Dutchman William of Orange. Following the death of Queen Anne, the last Stuart monarch, in 1714, the introduction of the continental Protestant Hanoverians proved ultimately to have established the succession, which survived the challenges of Jacobite rebellions in 1715 and 1745; three Georges reigned from 1714 to 1820. The king continued to govern through his ministers, whose success from the age of Walpole onwards (1721–42) greatly relied on management of the House of Commons, which represented primarily the interests of the landed and moneyed minorities of the population. If, by the end of the period, American independence and the Revolution of 1789 in France were symptoms of widespread demands for the extension of influence in a nation's

affairs and a wider sharing of its prosperity among the population, in Britain one immediate consequence of the wars against Revolutionary France, which only ended in 1815 at Waterloo, was domestic political repression.

(By the end of the period covered by this anthology, Britain had clearly grown through military conquest and commerce to the status of a major power, with interests in North America, the West Indies, the Indian subcontinent, and Australia.) If these depended in part on exploitation of natural resources and indigenous populations, on force, importation of slaves or transportation of convicts, the moral implications seem to have had less effect than the sense of Britain's growing standing in the world. This, together with the comparative political and religious order of the eighteenth century which was partly its cause, contributed to a cultural self-confidence which allowed native writers to see themselves as extending traditional forms and creating new. A theoretical respect for the conventions of continental neoclassicism was rarely allowed to stand in the way of innovation.

Religion and Ideas

Especially in the first half of our period, many tensions sprang from differences in religious belief and external form. The established Church of England attempted in the later seventeenth century to steer its way between the alleged superstition, authoritarianism and foreign sympathies of Roman Catholics, and the anti-social individualism and republicanism charged against dissenters, both groups being effectively excluded from aspects of public life and subjected to penalties by the Anglican Test Act of 1673. The strength of the religio-political issues is easily identified here in the writings, from different points of view, of Bunyan, Butler, Dryden and Swift. Although there were no political parties in the modern sense, the century's closing decades saw the groupings of Tories – supporters of the king and established church, landed gentlemen, conservative clergy – and Whigs – rich aristocrats, the rising city middle class of traders and money-men, individual Anglicans and dissenters. (The significance of the church as a career, and the importance of political influence in the distribution of offices, should never be forgotten: the lives of Swift, Sterne and Crabbe emphasise literature's debt to the established church.) Even when the fury of the seventeenth-century religious debate had cooled, the legal position of Alexander Pope as a Catholic 'outsider', and the intensity

of emotion in Johnson, Smart or Cowper remind us of the different effects religion continued to have in people's lives: in practice, the disabilities of various groups were somewhat moderated, (while the real threat to true religion came to be seen in the indifference of the masses, or the intellectual challenges of the philosophers.)

Partly in reaction against the hair-splitting religious controversies, there was by the end of the seventeenth century a recoil from fanatical 'enthusiasm' in favour of a more sober, rational and socially agreed attitude to religion, with a sense of its practical human value. Eighteenth-century philosophers such as Berkeley and Hume continued the process of investigating the limits of human knowledge reported by our senses, and the consequences for religious faith. Locke had said in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) that 'Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct'. By the middle of the following century we find in the heroes of Fielding or the sentimental novel exemplars of natural benevolence in which charitable conduct to one's neighbour is not only morally right but a source of pleasure to the self. This increasing emphasis on feeling, paralleled in poetry and drama, also found expression in the Methodist revival, initially within the Anglican church, in which, to the delight of the satirists (see Smollett), much stress was laid on awakening the heart in even the lowest classes. Concurrent with the development of philosophical scepticism was the rise of physical science, encouraged by the Royal Society, to which Charles II gave a charter in 1662 and which included such poets as Cowley and Dryden among its numbers. The rise of the scientific method of investigation actually strengthened certain kinds of religious belief, as it revealed a universe operating to the Newtonian laws of physics, which implied the benevolent harmony of a Creator: this unmysterious attitude, with few specific doctrines and a lowered valuation of God's revelation to man in the Bible, was known as Deism. Such works as Pope's *Essay on Man* show the influence of the new science and philosophy.

Some awareness of the religious and political background is necessary in this period not merely because the imaginative writing reflected live issues as it will in any age, but also because the writers themselves were not for the most part men in retirement from the world, or yet fully professional authors. A glance at the headnotes will show how many had careers in the church or in politics: among later MPs were Horace Walpole, Gibbon and Burke. In the period from the Restoration to the fall of Robert Walpole in 1742, the partisan activity of writers

was: intense: their imaginative independence does not negate the political engagement of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Pope's *Imitations of Horace*, Gay's *Beggar's Opera* and Fielding's satirical plays.) (Despite the Whig sympathies of Addison and Steele, the association of Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot and other wits of the Scriblerus Club with the ruling Tory Party until the death of Queen Anne in 1714, and their opposition to the long domination of Walpole, ensured that the Tories had most of the best tunes.)

Indeed, much of the finest literature of this period owes its strength to this aspect of its engagement: the writer is not in retreat, but participating in or actively criticising the public life of his society, whose tensions he dramatises imaginatively; he knows the ways of the world (or that part of it which interests the limited reading public) and embodies them in forms which are publicly accessible. In the period before 1700, the witty, cynical Restoration comedies of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve hold the mirror to the amorality of the tiny fashionable world while exploiting the shared nature of the drama: their comedy is a public act in which deviations from agreed social and moral standards are identified. The great satires of Dryden, Swift and Pope appeal to public scrutiny of public behaviour, whether in religion, politics, 'society', or the arts: it is appropriate that this is the great age of satire, which takes its stand not on the assertion of private emotion, but on the appeal to an argued case and the test of traditional, socially-tempered standards. It is entirely characteristic that the form which is the age's lasting contribution – the novel – though often concerned with the fate of the individual, regularly places him in a solidly realised social environment. (Compare the social reconciliations implicit in the Spectator's Club created by Addison and Steele after the previous century's divisions.) There is no contradiction between an author's awareness of this role and his personal commitment or individual voice.

'Augustanism'

The return of the Court from France in 1660 reinforced changes in literature which were already under way in England: as in religion and politics, there was a reaction against the more extravagant heights of metaphysical wit (to which Dryden gave the name), against quaint images and rugged rhythms, while the spacious and figurative prose

of the great preachers such as Donne, and learned authors such as Burton (*Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621), was held insufficiently functional for the communication of new facts and ideas: the Royal Society commended a compact, unadorned style. (This, with altered emphasis, also suited the desire for a style for gentlemanly intercourse, whether in essays, letters or discursive writing: Dryden's criticism and the *Spectator* essays are models of what poise and restraint could achieve; the comedies of the period were natural vehicles of well-bred wit, and the style extends, though often with ironic sharpness, into Swift and Fielding. By the later eighteenth century, both the expansion of the audience and some shifts in sensibility are reflected in the grander elaborations of Burke's oratory, Gibbon's history, and Johnson's Latinate style, in which the formal rhetoric has moved well away from the needs of one gentleman addressing another.)

In poetry, the Restoration reforms were perhaps more easily identified: Johnson's 'Life of Cowley' lays the charges against the metaphysicals; in Dryden and Pope he traces the triumph of the new manner. 'Augustan', like 'Romantic', is a term now used with suspicion, but it draws attention to the awareness of at least some Restoration men of the parallels between their own situation, writing for a restored court after decades of turmoil, and that of the great Roman poets Virgil and Horace, encouraged in the flowering of the arts under the Emperor Augustus after the Roman civil war of the first century BC: the elegant, allusive craftsmanship seemed to offer stylistic as well as political pointers. In an essay of 1759, 'An Account of the Augustan Age in England', Goldsmith placed it as culminating in the reign of Queen Anne. Reinforced by French influence, the creative and critical ambition was for clearly-moulded and accessible forms, for an inventiveness whose imaginative expression was disciplined by judgement, and by decorum – language appropriate to the form and to the nature of the communication. Thus, in the hierarchy of genres inherited from classical literature, epic ranked highest among the poetic forms, being a long narrative of heroic deeds, often military, related in an elevated diction with elaborate figures of speech; satire, by contrast, dealt with less salubrious characters, and might require more colloquial language. In drama the ancient distinction between the action of tragedy (the province of leaders) and comedy was reinforced by linguistic differentiation. The writer's craft therefore consisted partly in the adaptation of style to subject-matter to produce a congruous effect unless, as in the 'mock' forms of Pope or Gay, an

ironic effect was sought. When Johnson in his 'Life of Cowley' discusses Pope's famous definition of wit – 'nature to advantage dressed, / What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed' (*Essay on Criticism* 297–8) – he is insisting on the testing of literature by one of the period's crucial but difficult words – 'nature', which normally refers not so much to the external physical world (of whose beauties people were well aware) as to human nature, and particularly the permanent aspects of human experience: the neo-classical thinker believed these underpinned the view that, despite local diversities of time, place and custom, human nature was, in essence, always and everywhere the same. This being so, it is neither the business of the poet, as Johnson's Imlac says, to 'number the streaks of the tulip', nor, as his condemnation of the metaphysicals implies, to strive for originality of experience and perverse individuality of expression: 'originality' will not necessarily be a term of praise. The poet's (and by extension the artist's) business is to give expression to those permanent and fundamental truths long discovered; hence the stress on the past, on translation and 'imitation': Pope's *Essay on Criticism* reminds us that Nature and Homer are the same, and that the 'rules' of classical genres are 'not arbitrary', but grew from the poets' experience. The best literature is therefore usually that which does not shock or startle the reader by its astounding diction or imagery, but seems simultaneously both new and natural: see Johnson's comments on Gray's *Elegy*. (By the later eighteenth century, the old theories were severely weakened: it would be worth examining in the light of this debate Gray's Odes, or Smart, or Macpherson, or Burns; though Crabbe shows the survival of older attitudes.)

Writers and Readers

Who were the writers in this period, and who bought their works? In this context, we are not directly concerned with the kind of writing which was published in ephemeral pamphlets, ballad collections or chapbooks, which have rarely survived: these might sell in tens of thousands at 6d. each. In the mid-eighteenth century, probably less than half of working men (and a smaller proportion of women) could read; their modest purchases would have to be met from a family income of perhaps £1 per week. For this reading public, even novels in two or three volumes at 2s. 6d. or 3s. per volume were likely to be prohibitive in their demands on cash and time: novels by Defoe and

Fielding were thought great successes in selling 4000–6000 copies; poetry and less popular subjects tended to be proportionately more expensive, and to sell perhaps in hundreds. The traditional court and aristocratic patronage of serious literature gradually gave way to a system whereby authors might solicit subscriptions for a forthcoming book from friends and the public or, more commonly, sell their copyrights to bookseller-publishers: although there are examples of substantial earnings – Pope's thousands from his Homers, the hundreds for Fielding's novels, the thousands made in the lucrative field of history by Smollett, Hume, Gibbon and Robertson – these are the exceptions: by the end of the eighteenth century, even with an increased reading public and more accessible forms, very few authors made a good regular living from writing. Few indeed of the major figures would have regarded themselves purely as professional writers; those who were not in politics or the church might have a background of medicine or the law: significant exceptions are Defoe's connections with trade, Richardson's printing business, and Burns's backbreaking acquaintance with a kind of agriculture remote from the great landscape gardeners. By the end of the eighteenth century, the reading public had widened from the few hundreds or thousands able to understand intimately the social allusions of Restoration comedy or the literary ancestry of Pope's Horace; but the average reader of the literature in this volume was still likely to be a relatively prosperous and educated male member of at least the middle class; the average writer here had probably attended one of the great English public schools, or Oxford or Cambridge, or a Scottish university, or Trinity College, Dublin. (Large contributions were made by the Scots – Arbuthnot, Thomson, Smollett, Boswell, Macpherson, Burns, Mackenzie, and the philosophers Smith and Hume – and the Anglo-Irish – Swift, Congreve, Burke, Goldsmith, Sheridan – most of whom had to come to London to make their names. Who but a Scot – Thomson – would have written 'Rule Britannia'?)

Drama

The reopening of the theatres after the Restoration heralded a long period in which drama was regularly performed and enjoyed, whether as the wit of fashionable comedy or the rhymed heroic plays and more compassionate blank-verse tragedies of Dryden. The interest in feeling flowered in the earlier eighteenth century in the sentimental comedies

of Cibber and Steele, whose morality came to have a stultifying effect only partly countered by the later 'laughing comedy' of Goldsmith and Sheridan. The drama was also the vehicle for the political comments of Fielding and others until subjected to censorship after the Licensing Act of 1737. It was a period of star actors – dominated after 1741 by the new naturalistic style of Garrick, actor–author–producer – and star actresses, permitted on stage after the Restoration. Shakespeare was frequently performed, though usually in versions that were cut or 'adapted', often in ways quite false to the originals. Through the period, then, theatre and acting may fairly be said to have flourished, with many major figures such as Pope and Johnson trying their hands at plays. Yet no tragedy from the entire period has held its place in the repertoire; and, apart from the cluster of Restoration works, only a handful of eighteenth-century comedies: *The Beggar's Opera*; Goldsmith's *The Good-Natur'd Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*; Sheridan's *The Rivals*, *The Critic* and *The School for Scandal*. The diversion of talent into novel-writing after the Licensing Act is at best a partial explanation of this curious thinness of achievement. The extracts here from Congreve and Sheridan show something of the comic complexity of plot, the repartee, and the changing explorations of personal values; Gay's multi-layered *Beggar's Opera* is *sui generis*; its topsy-turvy world can be enjoyed without any knowledge of the music or the political context.

Fiction

Most readers will come to eighteenth-century fiction having already encountered Jane Austen and the Victorian classics such as Dickens, the Brontës, George Eliot; for them there is the double pleasure of witnessing the infancy of the genre, and recognising in the early masters the origins of many familiar techniques of narration and characterisation, unencumbered by Victorian 'good taste'.

Given the long dominance of the novel among non-dramatic forms, we may easily forget that the form as we understand it has existed for only some two and a half centuries. Although there had been prose fiction since antiquity, it is clear that the eighteenth century saw the rise of new kinds of subject-matter and style, even though these were not uniform. In *Rambler*, 4 (1750) Johnson distinguished between the traditional romance – associated with remote settings, lofty characters, extravagant adventures – and modern 'familiar histories', in which

the appeal is rather to the reader's recognition of the contemporary world. Although Robinson Crusoe on his desert island might seem an exception, his extraordinary adventure is not conducted by Defoe in terms of fantastic monsters or remote impossibilities: the core of the book relies on Crusoe's detailed descriptions of the practical efforts by which he comes to terms with his situation. The kind of novel of which Defoe was master – the retrospective first-person narration – no doubt owed much to existing non-fictional forms such as histories, travels, personal memoirs. Richardson, his successor in the depiction from inside of the struggles of the isolated individual, composed his narratives from his protagonists' letters and journals, again adapting existing forms. This line in the early novel has the capacity to draw us into the characters' dilemmas, to see the world from their points of view and, particularly in Richardson, to live through the instalments of their experiences without knowing the results: the comic possibilities arising from the first-person narrator's struggle with his material were soon richly explored by Sterne in *Tristram Shandy*. That the early novelists did not tamely adopt a uniform manner is easily seen in the contrast between Richardson and Fielding, who in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* took the role of informed ironic commentator on the fortunes of his created world. But despite the varieties of technique and the establishment of new conventions, Johnson was right in discerning a common interest in the contemporary world, in people from the middle and lower ranks of life, and in situations which, if not commonplace, were at least plausible. The best explanation for the rise of the novel in this period is that it fulfilled the need of the growing middle class, with increasing education, money and leisure for books, but unwilling to be satisfied with the absurdities of romance or the values of an inherited classical culture, to articulate its own self-assurance and identify its own heroes. (The capacity of the form to explore sympathetically the economic role of women (*Moll Flanders*), their domestic role (Fielding's *Amelia*), and their struggles to choose their own lives (Richardson) made possible the rise of the female novelist, such as Sarah Fielding, Charlotte Lennox and Fanny Burney.) It is perhaps typical that in contrast to the sailor and servant offered by Defoe and Richardson, Fielding should contrive that his protagonists emerge as well-born heirs from their obscure social origins. In Fielding and Smollett, plotting and characterisation from the drama are recognisably transmitted to the nineteenth century: there is much evil and violence, but the prevailing mood is of comedy;

only in Richardson does the novel reach the intensity of tragedy. In the closing decades of the century, changes in taste and in readers' emotional response encourage the minor subgenres of the sentimental novel, as in Mackenzie, and its fellow-traveller in frissons, the gothic novel, from Walpole on, which in period, setting and extravagance of incident returns to the fancy-liberating remoteness forewarned by the major figures earlier: not until Jane Austen returned to the central interests of the novel was their achievement paralleled.

Poetry

If poetry from Dryden to Crabbe seems puzzling, this is often because readers approach it expecting the dramatic flashes of the metaphysicals or the confessional intimacy of the post-Wordsworthians. For the second group in particular, the favoured poetry will be that which seems most to anticipate the Romantics' response to nature, their characteristic isolated introspection: the blank-verse descriptions of Thomson and Cowper, the melancholy of Gray's *Elegy*, seem closer to the heart of the matter than the intensely contemporary reference of the satirists and the snip-snap of the heroic couplet. But this view, though it reflects an eighteenth-century argument conducted by Johnson and the Warton brothers amongst others about the true tradition and future of English poetry, applies false assumptions and blocks off sources of pleasure. It may be salutary to remember that not all was satire, that the topographical blank verse of *The Seasons* is contemporary with *The Dunciad*, *The Castle of Indolence* with *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. There was always a concern to preserve earlier achievements, to keep open the springs of fancy and imagination associated in the minds of the Wartons with the descriptive properties of Milton's minor poems – *Il Penseroso* was influential – with the freer movement of blank verse, with the quaint diction, imagery and complex stanza of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. This interest in the poetical possibilities of the past is further seen in Addison's *Spectator* essays on ballads, in Gray's interest in Old Norse and Welsh poetry, in Chatterton's medieval fabrications and Macpherson's Gaelic 'translations', and in Percy's collection of old ballads and romances in *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). If there are antiquarian curiosities at play, there is also an attraction to the literature of simpler, more primitive societies, less trammelled by the conventions of urban neo-classicism and the traditions of Latin literature, more liberating to the

poet's imagination. The argument about the nature and role of poetry and the position of the moderns is implicitly carried on both in the imaginative writing – Pope's Horatian Imitations, Gray's *Bard*, Beattie's *Minstrel*, Collins's *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands* – and in the criticism: Burke's *Enquiry* applies the new interest in the sublime to *Paradise Lost*, and is contemporary with Gray's lofty, obscure Pindaric Odes; Thomas Warton's *History* (1774–81) revalued poetry from Chaucer to Spenser, while his brother Joseph's *Essay on Pope* (two volumes, 1756, 1782) placed him in a lower division than the truly sublime and pathetic Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton; Johnson's criticism over forty years applied more conservative standards. (Some aspects of the interest in poetry remote in time or place may be paralleled in the settings of gothic novels, the gothic houses created by Walpole and Beckford, the artificial ruins in landscape gardens, the exoticism of *Vathek*, Percy's first English translation of a Chinese novel, in 1761, and in the vogue for chinoiserie.)

The public nature of much writing in this period has already been discussed: it follows that the best poetry is often concerned with man in his social aspects, in his relationship with political or economic groups, but to take the rarity of the confessional note as a sign of weak emotions is a serious error – it is rather a source of strength for Dryden and Pope to be able to address publicly and urgently themes of shared significance for their readership; passion, albeit highly wrought, is there in plenty. Johnson, whose private papers show amply the personal relevance of hope and disillusion, chose to articulate those themes in the grand manner in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, speaking partly in the voice of Juvenal to examine them in a series of externalised historical examples. For delicate handlings of the personal in the social, one need only look at Dryden's *To Mr Driden* or Pope's *Epistle to Miss Blount*: grasp of their themes and tones is a fair test of sympathy for the poetry of this period.

Objection is sometimes made to the 'poetic diction' used in certain contexts such as epic or pastoral poetry to extend the suggestiveness of the language by reference to the original Latin sense of words, or by elaborate phrases avoiding everyday diction (Johnson censured 'dun', 'knife', 'peeping through a blanket', in *Macbeth*, I.5.48–52). Thus in Pope's *Windsor Forest*, 139–43 'the scaly breed' are fish, and the eel's 'volumes' are not books but coils. The extent of this diction as compared with other literary periods is often exaggerated. More

characteristic is the preference in narrative and satiric verse from Dryden to Crabbe for the heroic couplet (though there are numerous significant uses of blank verse, ballad stanzas, Spenserian stanzas, and the elaborate forms of Pindaric odes). The heroic couplet rhymes iambic pentameters (i.e. ten-syllabled lines) in pairs, each pair often marking a complete unit of thought, within which individual lines or half-lines can parallel each other; the poet can also exploit the 'caesura', or pause in mid-line, and can link words for intensification, by such sound affects as assonance or alliteration: in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, Pope imagines Atticus as

Willing to wound, / and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, / and hesitate dislike

where the opposing meanings of the first two half-lines are reinforced by parallel structures; in the first line, the alliteration of 'w' is confined to the first half; in the second line, the 'h' links the two halves. This is part of the traditional craftsmanship expected of the poet, who at best uses it as a means of organising and intensifying his thought. Compare the very different effects encouraged by the blank-verse flow in Milton or Wordsworth.

Other Forms

Our understanding of the social, intellectual and literary background is greatly strengthened by reading in those other forms which flourished in our period. It was an age of great prose-writing, as styles of varying formality and flexibility evolved to meet different needs. In the criticism from Dryden to Johnson, we can trace the development of Shakespeare's reputation and the interest in the true poetic tradition; the periodical essay (*Spectator*, *Rambler*) was the vehicle of literary criticism as well as social and moral instruction. Letter-writing (often with an eye on publication) was a cultivated art: Walpole's great series is a major source. In the hands of Robertson or Gibbon, history was not fact-grubbing but art and elegant discipline. The vivid personal writing of journals (Pepys, Boswell) overlaps with more formal memoir, travels, autobiography and life (Cibber, Gibbon, Johnson, Boswell); these are amongst the most attractive ways of learning about the flesh and blood that gave the imaginative literature its context. In reading Johnson's diaries or Boswell's analysis of his conflicts, we see the tensions of the isolated individual at war with his own melancholy

doubts: the headnotes to selections indicate how many writers suffered from mental instability. Yet the case of Johnson also suggests the positive aspect of the writer's position, as spokesman for a tradition, and as part of a social network of culture and public life, of which the famous Club is a symbol. Many of the age's achievements in other arts – painting, music, architecture from the modest villa to Palladian mansion or the large-scale urban developments of Bath and the New Town in Edinburgh – might be examined in this light.

This Anthology

This selection can only begin to point the reader in certain directions by offering either short complete works or extracts from longer prose works in particular. In addition to the pleasure of individual works, he may use them as guides for the volumes of collected poems, other novels or plays by the same authors, and for more extensive collections of the poets. The charms of the miscellaneous, less formal writing also contribute to our understanding of the major authors, who did not work in a vacuum. By setting different kinds of poetry or fiction from the same period against each other, we clarify the choices of technique which authors were making, while a chronological reading reminds us of debts to the Renaissance and earlier seventeenth century, as well as the powerful inheritance transmitted to the nineteenth. A chronological sense also sharpens our awareness of the development of particular kinds of subject-matter (the rise of the middle classes, the presence of landscape) and of attitude (satire, sentimentalism).

Books for most of this period were originally printed with variations in spelling and punctuation from modern norms, and with much greater use of italics and initial capital letters: in this anthology the texts are usually modernised versions of reliable editions. However, the Scots poets Fergusson and Burns, the idiosyncratic Sterne, and the youthful Jane Austen have been allowed in part to retain their distinctive characters.

IMcG

Note on Annotation and Glossing

An asterisk * at the end of a word indicates that such words are glossed in the margin.

A dagger † at the end of a word or phrase indicates that the word or phrase is annotated, or given a longer gloss, at the foot of the page.

Note on Dates

Where dates appear at the end of extracts, that on the left denotes the date of composition, that on the right, the date of publication.

Samuel Butler

1613–80

Having been a Justice of the Peace's clerk, and an officer in aristocratic households, Butler won rapid fame with *Hudibras* (1662), which examined some of the attitudes underlying the Civil War and Commonwealth. Further parts followed in 1663 and 1678; Butler also wrote shorter satires and prose *Characters*. Charles II rewarded him financially.

Hudibras aims at grotesque satiric effects undercutting the story of the chivalric hero (whose name comes from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*) by the semi-doggerel verse, forced rhymes and mean characters: the knight is a narrow-minded Presbyterian. The hard-hitting satire of religious self-deception was much admired by Swift.

From HUDIBRAS

From The First Part Canto I

[The Character of the Hero]

THE ARGUMENT

Sir Hudibras his passing worth,
The manner how he sallied forth;
His arms and equipage are shown;
His horse's virtues and his own.
Th' adventure of the bear and fiddle
Is sung, but breaks off in the middle.

When civil fury first grew high,
And men fell out they knew not why;
When hard words, jealousies, and fears
Set folks together by the ears,
And made them fight, like mad or drunk,
For Dame Religion as for punk,*
Whose honesty they all durst swear for,
Though not a man of them knew wherefore;

where

When gospel-trumpeter, surrounded
10 With long-eared[†] rout, to battle sounded;

And pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
Was beat with fist instead of a stick;
Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,
And out he rode a-colonelling.

15 A wight* he was, whose very sight would
Entitle him Mirror of Knighthood,
That never bowed his stubborn knee
To anything but chivalry,

20 Nor put up blow[†] but that which laid
Right Worshipful on shoulder-blade;
Chief of domestic[†] knights and errant,
Either for charnel[†] or for warrant:

Great on the bench, great in the saddle,
That could as well bind o'er as swaddle;[†]
25 Mighty he was at both of these,
And styled of war as well as peace.

(So some rats, of amphibious nature,
Are either for the land or water.)

30 But here our authors make a doubt
Whether he were more wise or stout.[†]
Some hold the one, and some the other;
But howsoe'er they make a pother,

35 The difference was so small, his brain
Outweighed his rage but half a grain;
Which made some take him for a tool
That knaves do work with, called a fool;

40 And offer to lay wagers that,
As Montaigne,[†] playing with his cat,
Complains she thought him but an ass,
Much more she would Sir Hudibras.

(For that's the name our valiant knight
To all his challenges did write.)

But they're mistaken very much;

45 'Tis plain enough he was no such.
We grant, although he had much wit,
He was very shy of using it,

long-eared asses, but also short-haired
Puritans
blow knighthood is conferred by a sword tap
on shoulder
domestic as JP, on the bench
charnel written challenge (of knight errant)

swaddle beat; and bind up (hence play on
legal 'bind o'er')
stout stout-hearted, brave
Montaigne (1533-92), sceptical French
essayist

As being loath to wear it out,
And therefore bore it not about,
Unless on holidays or so,

As men their best apparel do.

Beasts, 'tis known he could speak Greek
As naturally as pigs squeak;
That Latin was no more difficile,
Than to a blackbird 'tis to whistle.

Being rich in both, he never scanted
His bounty unto such as wanted;
But much of either would afford
To many that had not one word.

For Hebrew roots,[†] although they're found
To flourish most in barren ground,
He had such plenty as sufficed
To make some think him circumcised.[†]

And truly so he was perhaps,

Not as a proselyte, but for claps.[†]
He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skilled in analytic.

He could distinguish and divide

A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;
On either which he would dispute,
To confute, change hands, and still confute.

He'd undertake to prove by force

Of argument, a man's no horse;

He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,

And that a lord may be an owl,[†]

A calf* an alderman, a goose a justice,
And rooks* committee-men and trustees.

He'd run in debt by disputation,

And pay with ratiocination.

All this by syllogism,[†] true

In mood and figure, he would do.

For rhetoric, he could not ope

His mouth but out there flew a trope;[†]

And when he happened to break off

In the middle of his speech, or cough,

He had hard words ready to show why,

And tell what rules he did it by.

Hebrew roots elements of man's basic original
language
circumcised as if a Hebrew
rooks funeral diseases
owl symbolically, wise-seeming fool
syllogism logical form of argument
trope figure of speech

fool
cheats

- Else when with greatest art he spoke,
 You'd think he talked like other folk;
 For all a rhetorician's rules
 Teach nothing but to name his tools.
 His ordinary rate of speech
 In loftiness of sound was rich,
 A Babylonish[†] dialect
 Which learned pedants much affect.
 It was a parti-coloured dress
 Of patched and piebald languages;
 'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,
 Like fustian heretofore on satin.[†]
 It had an odd promiscuous tone,
 As if he had talked three parts in one;
 Which made some think, when he did gabble,
 They'd heard three labourers of Babel;
 Or Cerberus[†] himself pronounce
 A leash of languages at once.
 This he as volubly would vent,
 As if his stock would ne'er be spent;
 And truly to support that charge
 He had supplies as vast and large;
 For he could coin or counterfeit
 New words with little or no wit,
 Words so debased and hard, no stone
 Was hard enough to touch[†] them on;
 And when with hasty noise he spoke 'em,
 The ignorant for current took 'em;
 That, had the orator[†] who once
 Did fill his mouth with pebble stones
 When he harangued, but known his phrase,
 He would have used no other ways.
 In mathematics he was greater
 Than Tycho Brahe[†] or Erra Pater;[†]
 For he by geometric scale
 Could take the size of pots of ale;
 Resolve by sines and tangents[†] straight
 If bread or butter wanted weight;

Babylonish mixture of languages (Genesis 11)
fustian . . . *satins* coarse cloth, cut to show
Cerberus in classical legend, three-headed dog
 at entry to Hades
touch test their quality
orator Demosthenes, Athenian of the fourth
 century BC
Brahe (1546–1601), Danish astronomer
Pater pseudonym of sixteenth-century
 astrologer
sines . . . *tangents* mathematical terms

- And wisely tell what hour o' the day
 The clock does strike, by algebra.
 Besides he was a shrewd philosopher,
 And had read every text and gloss over:
 Whate'er the crabbedest author hath,
 He understood by implicit faith;
 Whatever sceptic could inquire for,
 For every why he had a wherefore;
 Knew more than forty of them do,
 As far as words and terms could go.
 All which he understood by rote,
 And, as occasion served, would quote;
 No matter whether right or wrong,
 They might be either said or sung.
 His notions fitted things so well,
 That which was which he could not tell;
 But oftentimes mistook the one
 For th' other, as great clerks* have done.
 He could reduce all things to acts,
 And knew their natures by abstracts,
 Where entity and quiddity,[†]
 The ghosts of defunct bodies, fly;
 Where Truth in person does appear,
 Like words congealed in northern air.
 He knew what's what, and that's as high
 As metaphysic wit can fly.
 In school-divinity as able
 As he that hight Irrefragable;
 A second Thomas, or, at once
 To name them all, another Duns,[†]
 Profound in all the nominal[†]
 And real ways beyond them all,[†]
 For he a rope of sand could twist
 As tough as learned Sorbonist;[†]
 And weave fine cobwebs, fit for skull
 That's empty when the moon is full;
 Such as take lodgings in a head
 That's to be let unfurnished.

entity . . . *quiddity* being and essence (in
 philosophy)
hight Irrefragable . . . *Duns* called
 Unanswerable: Alexander of Hales (?1175–
 1245); St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74); Duns
 Scotus (c. 1266–1308), origin of 'dunce'; all
 theologians
nominal . . . *them all* argument about reality
 of mental objects
Sorbonist scholar from Sorbonne, the
 University of Paris

He could raise scruples dark and nice,*

And after solve 'em in a trice;

As if divinity had caught

The itch of purpose to be scratched;

Or, like a mountebank,[†] did wound

And stab herself with doubts profound,

Only to show with how small pain

The sores of faith are cured again;

Although by woeful proof we find

They always leave a scar behind.

He knew the seat of Paradise,[†]

Could tell in what degree it lies,

And, as he was disposed, could prove it

Below the moon, or else above it;

What Adam dreamt of when his bride

Came from her closet in his side;

Whether the devil tempted her

By a High Dutch interpreter;

If either of them had a navel;

Who first made music malleable;[†]

Whether the Serpent at the Fall

Had cloven feet, or none at all.

All this, without a gloss or comment,

He would unriddle in a moment

In proper terms, such as men smatter

When they throw out and miss the matter.

For his religion, it was fit

To match his learning and his wit:

'Twas Presbyterian true blue,[†]

For he was of that stubborn crew

Of errant[†] saints whom all men grant

To be the true church militant;

Such as do build their faith upon

The holy text of pike and gun;

Decide all controversies by

Infalible artillery;

And prove their doctrine orthodox

By apostolic blows and knocks;

mountebank performer, medicine-seller

He knew . . . Paradise all actual topics of

historic speculation

malleable Pythagoras allegedly studied

hammer notes

true blue colour of religious loyalty and

therefore anti-royalism

errant wandering, but also notorious (arrant)

Call fire and sword and desolation

A godly, thorough Reformation,

Which always must be carried on,

And still be doing, never done;

As if religion were intended

For nothing else but to be mended:

A sect whose chief devotion lies

In odd perverse antipathies,

In falling out with that or this,

And finding somewhat still amiss;

More peevish, cross, and splenetic,

Than dog distract or monkey sick;

That with more care keep holy-day

The wrong,[†] than others the right way;

Compound for sins they are inclined to,

By damning those they have no mind to;

Still so perverse and opposite,

As if they worshipped God for spite.

The self-same thing they will abhor

One way,[†] and long another[†] for.

Free will they one way disavow,

Another, nothing else allow.

All piety consists therein

In them, in other men all sin.

Rather than fail, they will defy

That which they love most tenderly:

Quarrel with minced-pies, and disparage

Their best and dearest friend, plum-porridge;

Fat pig and goose itself oppose,

And blaspheme custard through the nose.[†] . . .

1658-60

1662

The wrong excessively severe
one way by predestination
another by private inspiration
nose puritan preacher's nasal whine

John Aubrey

1626–97

Aubrey was an antiquarian who unsystematically collected information about archaeological sites and about interesting figures of the present and recent past. Educated at Trinity College, Oxford, he later became a fellow of the Royal Society. He is now best known for the *Brief Lives* published after his death from the collection of his manuscripts in Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, although another Oxford antiquarian, Antony Wood, had made some unfair use of his material. Aubrey's *Lives*, not always reliable, combine revealing anecdotes, accurate fact, tradition and gossip.

From BRIEF LIVES

William Shakespeare

Mr William Shakespeare was born at Stratford upon Avon in the county of Warwick. His father was a butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he killed a calf he would do it in a high style, and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher's son in this town that was held not at all inferior to him for a natural wit, his acquaintance and coetanean[†], but died young.

This William being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess, about eighteen, and was an actor at one of the play-houses, and did act exceedingly well (now B. Jonson[†] was never a good actor, but an excellent instructor). He began early to make essays at dramatic poetry, which at that time was very low; and his plays took well. He was a handsome, well shaped man: very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit.

The humour[†] of the constable, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks – I think it was midsummer night that he happened to lie there – which is the road from London to

coetanean person of same age
Ben Jonson (1572–1637) poet, dramatist and friend of Shakespeare

humour dominant mood

Stratford, and there was living that constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxon: Mr Josias Howe is of that parish, and knew him. Ben Jonson and he did gather humours of men daily wherever they came. One time as he was at the tavern at Stratford super Avon, one Combes, an old rich usurer, was to be buried, he makes there this extemporary epitaph,

Ten in the hundred the Devill allowes,

But Combes will have twelve, he swears and vows:

If any one askes who lies in this tombe,

'Hoh!' quoth the Devill, 'Tis my John o Combe.'

He was wont to go to his native country once a year. I think I have been told that he left 2 or 300 £ *per annum* there and thereabout to a sister.

I have heard Sir William Davenant[†] and Mr Thomas Shadwell[†] (who is counted the best comedian we have now) say that he had a most prodigious wit, and did admire his natural parts[†] beyond all other dramatical writers. He was wont to say (B. Jonson's *Underwoods*[†]) that he 'never blotted out a line in his life'; said Ben Jonson, 'I wish he had blotted-out a thousand.'

His comedies will remain wit as long as the English tongue is understood, for that he handles *more hominum* [the customs of men]. Now our present writers reflect so much upon particular persons and coxcomberies, that twenty years hence they will not be understood.

Though, as Ben Jonson says[†] of him, that he had but little Latin and less Greek, he understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country.

1813

Davenant (1606–68) dramatist and Poet Laureate, alleged son of Shakespeare
Shadwell (?1642–92) comic dramatist and Poet Laureate
parts talents

Underwoods verse collection (actually said in his prose *Discoveries*, 1641)
says 'To the Memory of . . . Shakespeare' (1618), misquoted

John Bunyan

1628–88

Bunyan was born near Bedford, the son of a metal-worker, and had a local education. He served in the parliamentary army in the Civil War. His early reading was in the Bible and in works of piety and Protestant history. After joining a nonconformist church in 1653, he took to preaching in Bedford; arrested for this in 1660, since he was unlicensed, he spent almost all of a twelve-year period in jail: on his release he became pastor at the church, but was reimprisoned in 1676. During the first period in prison, he wrote several books, notably *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), the record of his progress from sin to religion. During the second, he completed the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (published 1678; second part, 1684). *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680) is an allegory of crime and punishment; *The Holy War* (1682) an allegory of spiritual struggle. In the allegory of his most famous work, the author dreams of Christian's journey from the City of Destruction, through areas of test and temptation, to the Celestial City. Its style blends the imagery of the Bible with the vivid simplicity of a realistic novel.

From THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

[*Christian in Vanity Fair*][†]

Then I saw in my dream that when they were got out of the wilderness they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity;[†] and at the town there is a fair kept called Vanity Fair. It is kept all the year long; it beareth the name of Vanity Fair, because the town where 'tis kept is lighter than vanity; and also, because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is Vanity. As is the saying of the wise, *All that cometh is vanity*.

This Fair is no new erected business, but a thing of ancient standing; I will show you the original of it.

Christian and his companion Faithful have been warned by Evangelist that they face martyrdom in the next town

Vanity

worthlessness

Almost five thousand years ago, there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City, as these two honest persons are; and Beelzebub,[†] Apollyon, and Legion,[†] with their companions, perceiving by the path that the Pilgrims made that their way to the City lay through this town of Vanity, they contrived here to set up a fair; a fair wherein should be sold of all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long. Therefore at this Fair are all such merchandise sold, as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments,[†] titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And moreover, at this Fair there is at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of all sorts.

Here are to be seen too, and that for nothing, thefts, murders, adulteries, false-swearers, and that of a blood-red colour.

And as in other fairs of less moment there are the several rows and streets under their proper names, where such and such wares are vended: so here likewise, you have the proper places, rows, streets (*viz.*[†] countries and kingdoms), where the wares of this Fair are soonest to be found: here is the Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row, where several sorts of vanities are to be sold. But as in other fairs, some one commodity is as the chief of all the fair, so the ware[†] of Rome[†] and her merchandise is greatly promoted in this Fair: only our English nation, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat.

Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town, where this lusty Fair is kept; and he that will go to the City, and yet not go through this town, must needs go out of the world. The Prince of Princes[†] himself, when here, went through this Town to his own country, and that upon a fair-day too. Yea, and as I think it was Beelzebub, the chief lord of this Fair, that invited him to buy of his vanities; yea, would have made him lord of the Fair, would he but have done him reverence as he went through the town. Yea, because he was such a person of honour, Beelzebub had him from street to street, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a little time, that he might if possible allure that Blessed One, to cheapen and buy some of his vanities. But he had no mind to the merchandise, and therefore left the town without laying out so much as one farthing upon these vanities.

Beelzebub . . . Legion biblical fiends;
Christian has already defeated Apollyon in battle
preferments promotions to worldly 'places'

viz. (Latin) videlicet: namely
Rome the Roman Catholic Church
Prince of Princes Jesus, tempted to 'cheapen' (bargain) in Matthew 4

50 This Fair therefore is an ancient thing, of long standing, and a very great Fair.

Now these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this Fair: well, so they did; but behold, even as they entered into the Fair, all the people in the Fair were moved, and the town itself as it were in a hubbub about them; and that for several reasons: for,

55 First, the pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that Fair. The people therefore of the Fair made a great gazing upon them: Some said they were fools, some they were bedlams,[†] and some 'They are outlandish-men.'

60 Secondly, and as they wondered at their apparel so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said; they naturally spoke the language of Canaan,[†] but they that kept the Fair, were the men of this world: so that from one end of the Fair to the other, they seemed barbarians[†] each to the other.

65 Thirdly, but that which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares, they cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity*; and look upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic was in Heaven.

70 One chanced mockingly, beholding the carriages[†] of the men, to say unto them, 'What will ye buy?' but they, looking gravely upon him, said, 'We buy the truth.' At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more; some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them. At last things came to an hubbub and great stir in the Fair; insomuch that all order was confounded. Now was word presently brought to the great one of the Fair, who quickly came down and deputed some of his most trusty friends to take these men into examination about whom the Fair was almost overturned. So the men were brought to examination; and they that sat upon them asked them whence they came, whither they went, and what they did there in such an unusual garb? The men told them that they were pilgrims and strangers in the world, and that they were going to their own country, which was the heavenly Jerusalem; and that they had given none occasion to the men of the town, nor yet to the merchandisers, thus to abuse them, and to let[†] them in their journey; except it was for that when one asked them what they would buy, they said they would buy the truth. But they that were appointed

bedlams insane (from Bethlehem Royal Hospital)
Canaan the biblical Promised Land
barbarians foreigners
carriages behaviour
let hinder

140 to examine them did not believe them to be any other than bedlams and mad, or else such as came to put all things into a confusion in the Fair. Therefore they took them, and beat them, and besmeared them with dirt, and then put them into the cage, that they might be made a spectacle to all the men of the Fair. There therefore they lay for some time, and were made the objects of any man's sport, or malice, or revenge, the great one of the Fair laughing still at all that befell them. But the men being patient, and not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, and giving good words for bad, and kindness for injuries done, some men in the Fair that were more observing, and less prejudiced than the rest, began to check and blame the baser sort for their continual abuses done by them to the men. They therefore in an angry manner let fly at them again, counting them as bad as the men in the cage, and telling them that they seemed confederates, and should be made partakers of their misfortunes. The other replied that for aught they could see, the men were quiet, and sober, and intended nobody any harm; and that there were many that traded in their Fair that were more worthy to be put into the cage, yea, and pillory too, than were the men that they had abused. Thus, after divers words had passed on both sides (the men behaving themselves all the while very wisely and soberly before them), they fell to some blows among themselves and did harm one to another. Then were these two poor men brought before their examiners again, and there charged as being guilty of the late hubbub that had been in the Fair. So they beat them pitifully, and hanged irons upon them, and led them in chains up and down the Fair, for an example and a terror to others, lest any should further speak in their behalf, or join themselves upon them. But Christian and Faithful behaved themselves yet more wisely, and received the ignominy and shame that was cast upon them with so much meekness and patience, that it won to their side (though but few in comparison of the rest) several of the men in the Fair. This put the other party yet into a greater rage, insomuch that they concluded the death of these two men. Wherefore they threatened that the cage, nor irons, should serve their turn, but that they should die for the abuse they had done and for deluding the men of the Fair.

145 Then were they remanded to the cage again, until further order should be taken with them. So they put them in, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

150 Here also they called again to mind what they had heard from their faithful friend Evangelist, and was the more confirmed in their way and sufferings by what he told them would happen to them. They also now comforted each other that whose lot it was to suffer, even he should have the best on't; therefore each man secretly wished that he might have that preferment; but committing themselves to the all-wise dispose

of him that ruleth all things, with much content they abode in the condition in which they were, until they should be otherwise disposed of.

Then a convenient time being appointed, they brought them forth to their trial in order to their condemnation. When the time was come, they were brought before their enemies and arraigned; the Judge's name was Lord Hategood. Their indictment was one and the same in substance, though somewhat varying in form; the contents whereof was this:

That they were enemies to, and disturbers of their trade; that they had made commotions and divisions in the town, and had won a party to their own most dangerous opinions, in contempt of the law of their prince.

Then Faithful began to answer that he had only set himself against that which had set itself against him that is higher than the highest. 'And,' said he, 'as for disturbance, I make none, being myself a man of peace; the party that were won to us were won by beholding our truth and innocence, and they are only turned from the worse to the better. And as to the King you talk of; since he is Beelzebub, the enemy of our Lord, I defy him and all his angels.'

Then proclamation was made, that they that had aught to say for their lord the King against the prisoner at the bar, should forthwith appear, and give in their evidence. So there came in three witnesses, to wit, Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank. They were then asked if they knew the prisoner at the bar and what they had to say for the lord the King against him.

Then stood forth Envy, and said to this effect: 'My lord, I have known this man a long time, and will attest upon my oath before this honourable bench, that he is—'

Judge. 'Hold, give him his oath.' So they swore him. Then he said, 'My lord, this man, notwithstanding his plausible name, is one of the vilest men in our country; he neither regardeth prince nor people, law nor custom, but doth all that he can to possess all men with certain of his disloyal notions, which he in the general calls principles of faith and holiness. And in particular, I heard him once myself affirm that Christianity, and the customs of our town of Vanity were diametrically opposite, and could not be reconciled. By which saying, my Lord, he doth at once not only condemn all our laudable doings, but us in the doing of them.'

Judge. Then did the Judge say to him, 'Hast thou any more to say?' *Envy.* 'My lord, I could say much more, only I would not be tedious to the court. Yet if need be, when the other gentlemen have given in their evidence, rather than anything shall be wanting that will dispatch him, I will enlarge my testimony against him.' So he was bid stand by.

Then they called Superstition, and bid him look upon the prisoner; they also asked what he could say for their lord the King against him. Then they swore him, so he began.

Superstition. 'My lord, I have no great acquaintance with this man, nor do I desire to have further knowledge of him; however this I know, that he is a very pestilent fellow, from some discourse that the other day I had with him in this town; for then talking with him, I heard him say that our religion was naught, and such by which a man could by no means please God: which sayings of his, my lord, your lordship very well knows what necessarily thence will follow, to wit, that we still do worship in vain, are yet in our sins, and finally shall be damned; and this is that which I have to say.'

Then was Pickthank sworn, and bid say what he knew, in behalf of their lord the King against the prisoner at the bar.

Pickthank. 'My lord, and you gentlemen all, this fellow I have known of a long time, and have heard him speak things that ought not to be spoke. For he hath railed on our noble Prince Beelzebub, and hath spoke contemptibly of his honourable friends, whose names are the Lord Old Man, the Lord Carnal Delight, the Lord Luxurious, the Lord Desire of Vain-glory, my old Lord Lechery, Sir Having Greedy, with all the rest of our nobility; and he hath said moreover, that if all men were of his mind, if possible, there is not one of these noblemen should have any longer a being in this town. Besides, he hath not been afraid to rail on you, my lord, who are now appointed to be his judge, calling you an ungodly villain, with many other such like vilifying terms, with which he hath bespattered most of the gentry of our town.' When this Pickthank had told his tale, the Judge directed his speech to the prisoner at the bar, saying, 'Thou runagate,[†] heretic, and traitor, hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?'

Faithful. 'May I speak a few words in my own defence?'

Judge. 'Sirrah, sirrah, thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place; yet that all men may see our gentleness towards thee, let us hear what thou hast to say.'

Faithful. '1. I say then in answer to what Mr Envy hath spoken, I never said aught but this, that what rule, or laws, or custom, or people, were flat against the Word of God, are diametrically opposite to Christianity. If I have said amiss in this, convince me of my error, and I am ready here before you to make my recantation.'

'2. As to the second, to wit, Mr Superstition, and his charge against me, I said only this, that in the worship of God there is required a divine faith; but there can be no divine faith without a divine revelation of the will of God: therefore whatever is thrust into the worship of

John Dryden

1631–1700

Dryden was educated at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He produced much of his early work in dramatic form, including (tragi-)comedy (*Marriage à-la-Mode*, 1672) and heroic plays in rhyme (*The Conquest of Granada*, 1670), later turning to blank verse (*All for Love*, 1678): these are now rarely performed, but his prologues reveal his practical interest in literary questions, developed in his elegant critical prose (*An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668). He became Poet Laureate in 1668 and Historiographer Royal in 1670, under Charles II, but lost office under William and Mary: *The Hind and the Panther* (1687) had marked his conversion to Catholicism from the Anglicanism of *Religio Laici* (1682). In his later years he returned to drama, but found more congenial expression in translation, notably of Virgil (1697), Ovid and Chaucer (in *Fables Ancient and Modern*, 1700), together with his critical writing. Dryden's criticism is accessible and unpedantic, the fruit of his creative experience; his vigour, mastery of the heroic couplet, and refinement of poetic language gave him great influence on the verse of the next century.

Mac Flecknoe (1682) ridicules the rival dramatist Thomas Shadwell, and provided Pope with hints for *The Dunciad* (1728). In *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), Dryden presents, in a brilliant reworking of the biblical story in II Samuel 13–19, the contemporary political drama of the potential succession to Charles II, whether by his Catholic brother, James Duke of York, or by his Protestant illegitimate son, James Duke of Monmouth, following the hysteria of the 'Popish Plot' (1678), which Titus Oates alleged was aimed at the king's life after Charles's dissolution of Parliament. England is represented as Israel, Charles as King David, Monmouth as Absalom, Oates as Corah, and the Earl of Shaftesbury, former royal counsellor and now opponent, as Achitophel. When the poem appeared, Shaftesbury was awaiting trial for high treason (the heroic style, with echoes of *Paradise Lost*, 1667, reflects the public issues at stake). Monmouth's later rebellion led to his execution in 1685.

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL

In pious times, ere priestcraft did begin,
Before polygamy was made a sin;
When man on many multiplied his kind,
Ere one to one was cursedly confined;
When nature prompted, and no law denied
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;
Then Israel's monarch, after Heaven's own heart,
His vigorous warmth did, variously, impart
To wives and slaves; and, wide as his command,
Scattered his Maker's image through the land.
Michal,[†] of royal blood, the crown did wear,
A soil ungrateful to the tiller's care:
Not so the rest; for several mothers bore
To godlike David several sons before.
But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,
No true succession could their seed attend.
Of all this numerous progeny was none
So beautiful, so brave as Absalon:[†]
Whether, inspired by some diviner lust,
His father got him with a greater gust;
Or that his conscious destiny made way
By manly beauty to imperial sway.
Early in foreign fields he won renown,
With kings and states allied to Israel's crown:
In peace the thoughts of war he could remove
And seemed as he were only born for love.
Whate'er he did was done with so much ease,
In him alone 'twas natural to please.
His motions all accompanied with grace;
And Paradise was opened in his face.
With secret joy indulgent David viewed
His youthful image in his son renewed:
To all his wishes nothing he denied,
And made the charming Annabel his bride.
What faults he had (for who from faults is free?)
His father could not, or he would not see.

Michal Queen Catherine was childless, unlike
Charles's mistresses
Absalon Monmouth (1649–85), son of Lucy

Walters, had fought against the Dutch,
French, and rebel Scots. He married the
Countess of Buccleuch ('Annabel', l.34)

Some warm excesses, which the law forbore,
Were construed youth that purged by boiling o'er;
And Amnon's murder,[†] by a specious name,
Was called a just revenge for injured fame.

40 Thus praised and loved, the noble youth remained,
While David undisturbed in Sion reigned.

But life can never be sincerely blest:

Heaven punishes the bad, and proves* the best.

45 The Jews, a headstrong, moody, murmuring race,
As ever tried th' extent and stretch of grace;

God's pampered people whom, debauched with ease,
No king could govern, nor no God could please;

(Gods they had tried of every shape and size

50 That godsmiths could produce or priests devise)

These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,

Began to dream they wanted liberty;

And when no rule, no precedent was found

Of men by laws less circumscribed and bound,

55 They led their wild desires to woods and caves

And thought that all but savages were slaves.

They who, when Saul[†] was dead, without a blow

Made foolish Ishbosheth the crown forego;

Who banished David did from Hebron[†] bring,

60 And with a general shout proclaimed him King:

Those very Jews who, at their very best,

Their humour[†] more than loyalty exprest,

Now wondered why so long they had obeyed

An idol monarch which their hands had made;

65 Thought they might ruin him they could create;

Or melt him to that golden calf,[†] a State.

But these were random bolts: no formed design

Nor interest made the factious crowd to join.

The sober part of Israel, free from stain,

70 Well knew the value of a peaceful reign;

And, looking backward with a wise affright,

Saw seams of wounds, dishonest to the sight;

In contemplation of whose ugly scars

They cursed the memory of civil wars.

Amnon's murder Monmouth was involved in several acts of violence, though not murder
Saul Oliver Cromwell (d. 1658) had been Lord Protector during Charles's exile. His son Richard ('Ishbosheth') briefly ruled; but the Restoration of the Stuarts followed in 1660
Hebron either Brussels, or Scotland, where Charles was crowned (1651)
humour mood, fickleness
golden calf false idol of the Israelites, here a 'state', republic

75 The moderate sort of men, thus qualified,
Inclined the balance to the better side;
And David's mildness managed it so well,
The bad found no occasion to rebel.

But when to sin our biased nature leans,
The careful Devil is still at hand with means,

And providently pimps for ill desires:

80 The Good Old Cause,[†] revived, a plot requires.

Plots, true or false, are necessary things,

To raise up commonwealths, and ruin kings.

85 Th' inhabitants of old Jerusalem[†]

Were Jebusites; the town so called from them;

And theirs the native right –

But when the chosen people grew more strong,

The rightful cause at length became the wrong;

90 And every loss the men of Jebus bore,

They still were thought God's enemies the more.

Thus worn and weakened, well or ill content,

Submit they must to David's government:

Impoverished and deprived of all command,

95 Their taxes doubled as they lost their land;

And, what was harder yet to flesh and blood,

Their gods disgraced, and burnt like common wood.

This set the heathen priesthood in a flame,

For priests of all religions are the same:

100 Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be,

Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,

In his defence his servants are as bold

As if he had been born of beaten gold.

The Jewish Rabbins,[†] though their enemies,

105 In this conclude them honest men and wise:

For 'twas their duty, all the learned think,

To espouse his cause by whom they eat and drink.

From hence began that Plot,[†] the nation's curse,

Bad in itself, but represented worse;

110 Raised in extremes, and in extremes decried;

With oaths affirmed, with dying vows denied;

Not weighed or winnowed by the multitude,

Good Old Cause the anti-monarchical struggle which led to the Civil War and deposition of the Stuarts
Jerusalem London; its ancient people, Roman Catholics, subject to penalties; the chosen people, Protestants
Jewish Rabbins Church of England clergymen
that Plot the 'Popish Plot' (see introductory note)

But swallowed in the mass, unchewed and crude.
Some truth there was, but dashed and brewed with lies,
To please the fools and puzzle all the wise.
Succeeding times did equal folly call

115

Believing nothing, or believing all.
Th' Egyptian rites[†] the Jebusites embraced,

Where gods were recommended by their taste.
Such savoury deities must needs be good,

120

As served at once for worship and for food.
By force they could not introduce these gods,

For ten to one in former days was odds;
So fraud was used (the sacrificer's trade):

Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade.
Their busy teachers mingled with the Jews,

125

And raked for converts even the court and stews;
Which Hebrew priests the more unkindly took,

Because the fleece accompanies the flock.
Some thought they God's anointed meant to slay

130

By guns, invented since full many a day:
Our author swears it not; but who can know

How far the Devil and Jebusites may go?
This plot, which failed for want of common sense,

135

Had yet a deep and dangerous consequence:
For, as when raging fevers boil the blood,

The standing lake soon floats into a flood,
And every hostile humour, which before

Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;
So several factions from this first ferment

140

Work up to foam, and threaten the government.
Some by their friends, more by themselves thought wise,

Opposed the power to which they could not rise.
Some had in courts been great and, thrown from thence,

145

Like fiends were hardened in impenitence.
Some, by their Monarch's fatal mercy grown

From pardoned rebels kinsmen to the throne,
Were raised in power and public office high:

Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie.
Of these the false Achitophel[†] was first,

150

A name to all succeeding ages curst:

Egyptian rites French, hence Catholic (such as transubstantiation)

Achitophel Anthony Ashley Cooper (1621–83), 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, former Lord

Chancellor, now active against royal and Catholic power; once a supporter of Cromwell

For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.

155

A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.

160

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide:
Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?

165

And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered, two-legged thing, a son,
Got,* while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.

170

In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state.
To compass this the triple bond[†] he broke,

175

The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke;

Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves in factious times

180

With public zeal to cancel private crimes;
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,

Where none can sin against the people's will:
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own.

185

Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin[†]

With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean;
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress,

190

Swift of dispatch and easy of access.

begotten

triple bond 1668 Alliance of England, Sweden and Holland, against France

Abbethdin Judge in the Jewish high court (i.e. S. as Chancellor), hence his gown (l.193)

Oh, had he been content to serve the crown
 With virtues only proper to the gown;
 Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
 From cockle that oppressed the noble seed;
 David for him his tuneful harp had strung
 And Heaven had wanted[†] one immortal song.
 But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
 And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land.
 Achitophel, grown weary to possess
 A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,
 Disdained the golden fruit to gather free,
 And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.
 Now, manifest of crimes contrived long since,
 He stood at bold defiance with his Prince;
 Held up the buckler of the people's cause
 Against the crown, and skulked behind the laws.
 The wished occasion of the Plot he takes;
 Some circumstances finds, but more he makes;
 By buzzing emissaries fills the ears
 Of listening crowds with jealousies and fears
 Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
 And proves the King himself a Jebusite.
 Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well
 Were strong with people easy to rebel.
 For, governed by the moon, the giddy Jews
 Tread the same track when she the prime[†] renews:
 And once in twenty years, their scribes record,
 By natural instinct they change their lord.
 Achitophel still wants a chief, and none
 Was found so fit as warlike Absalom:
 Not that he wished his greatness to create,
 (For politicians neither love nor hate)
 But, for he knew his title not allowed,
 Would keep him still depending on the crowd:
 That kingly power, thus ebbing out, might be
 Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.[†]
 Him he attempts with studied arts to please,
 And sheds his venom in such words as these:

wanted lacked (as often), because David the
 Psalmist praised Absalom instead
prime the moon's cycle, which would
 therefore refer to the roots of the Civil War

under Charles I (c. 1640), and the Restoration
 of his son, 1660
democracy rule of the people, then rarely a
 term of praise

'Auspicious prince! at whose nativity
 Some royal planet ruled the southern sky;
 Thy longing country's darling and desire;
 Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire;
 Their second Moses,[†] whose extended wand
 Divides the seas and shows the promised land;
 Whose dawning day in every distant age
 Has exercised the sacred prophet's rage;
 The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,
 The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!
 Thee, Saviour, thee, the nation's vows confess,
 And, never satisfied with seeing, bless;
 Swift, unspoken pomps thy steps proclaim,
 And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.
 How long wilt thou the general joy detain,
 Starve and defraud the people of thy reign?
 Content ingloriously to pass thy days,
 Like one of virtue's fools that feeds on praise;
 Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
 Grow stale and tarnish with our daily sight.
 Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be
 Or gathered ripe, or rot upon the tree.
 Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,
 Some lucky revolution of their fate;
 Whose motions if we watch and guide with skill,
 (For human good depends on human will)
 Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
 And from the first impression takes the bent;
 But, if unseized, she glides away like wind,
 And leaves repenting folly far behind.
 Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize,
 And spreads her locks before her[†] as she flies.
 Had thus old David, from whose loins you spring,
 Not dared, when fortune called him, to be King,
 At Gath[†] an exile he might still remain,
 And Heaven's anointing oil had been in vain.
 Let his successful youth your hopes engage,
 But shun th' example of declining age:
 Behold him setting in his western skies,
 The shadows lengthening as the vapours rise.

Moses Exodus 13–14 tells of the Israelites'
 flight from Egypt
before her fortune, like opportunity, is to be
 seized by the forelock

Gath Brussels, where David/Charles was in
 exile from Saul/Cromwell. He crossed the
 Jordan/English Channel in 1660

- 270 He is not now, as when on Jordan's sand
The joyful people thronged to see him land,
Covering the beach and blackening all the strand;
But, like the Prince of Angels, from his height
Comes tumbling downward with diminished light;
Betrayed by one poor plot to public scorn,
(Our only blessing since his curst return)
Those heaps of people, which one sheaf did bind,
Blown off and scattered by a puff of wind.
What strength can he to your designs oppose,
Naked of friends, and round beset with foes?
If Pharaoh's^t doubtful succour he should use,
A foreign aid would more incense the Jews:
Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring,
Foment the war, but not support the King;
Nor would the royal party e'er unite
With Pharaoh's arms, to assist the Jebusite;
Or, if they should, their interest soon would break,
And with such odious aid make David weak.
All sorts of men by my successful arts
Abhorring kings, estrange their altered hearts
From David's rule: and 'tis the general cry,
"Religion, commonwealth, and liberty."
If you, as champion of the public good,
Add to their arms a chief of royal blood,
What may not Israel hope, and what applause
Might such a general gain by such a cause?
Not barren praise alone, that gaudy flower,
Fair only to the sight, but solid power;
And nobler is a limited command,
Given by the love of all your native land,
Than a successive title, long and dark,
Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's ark.[†]
What cannot praise effect in mighty minds
When flattery soothes and when ambition blinds!
Desire of power, on earth a vicious weed,
Yet, sprung from high, is of celestial seed:
In God 'tis glory; and when men aspire,
'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.

Pharaoh Ruler of Egypt, hence Louis XIV of France
Noah's ark kingship based on long descent is contrasted with that based on popular support

- 110 Th' ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,
Too full of angel's metal[†] in his frame,
Unwarily was led from virtue's ways,
Made drunk with honour, and debauched with praise.
Half loath, and half consenting to the ill,
(For loyal blood within him struggled still)
He thus replied: 'And what pretence have I
To take up arms for public liberty?
My father governs with unquestioned right,
The faith's defender,[†] and mankind's delight;
Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws;
And Heaven by wonders has espoused his cause.
Whom has he wronged in all his peaceful reign?
Who sues for justice to his throne in vain?
What millions has he pardoned of his foes,
Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose?
Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good,
Inclined to mercy and averse from blood.
If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,
His crime is God's beloved attribute.
What could he gain, his people to betray,
Or change his right for arbitrary sway?
Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign
His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train.
If David's rule Jerusalem displease,
The dog-star[†] heats their brains to this disease.
Why then should I, encouraging the bad,
Turn rebel, and run popularly mad?
Were he a tyrant who, by lawless might,
Oppressed the Jews and raised the Jebusite,
Well might I mourn; but nature's holy bands
Would curb my spirits and restrain my hands:
The people might assert their liberty;
But what was right in them were crime in me.
His favour leaves me nothing to require,
Prevents* my wishes, and outruns desire.
What more can I expect while David lives?
All but his kingly diadem he gives;
And that' – But there he paused; then sighing, said –
'Is justly destined for a worthier head.

angel's metal puns on 'angel' (coin) and 'mettle' (spirit)
dog-star Sirius, associated with summer heat and madness
faith's defender monarchs from Henry VIII on held the title Defender of the Faith
anticipates

350 For when my father from his toils shall rest,
 And late augment the number of the blest,
 His lawful issue shall the throne ascend,
 Or the collateral line,[†] where that shall end.
 His brother, though oppressed with vulgar spite,
 Yet dauntless and secure of native right,
 Of every royal virtue stands possess'd,
 Still dear to all the bravest and the best.
 His courage foes, his friends his truth proclaim;
 His loyalty the King, the world his fame.
 His mercy even th' offending crowd will find,
 For sure he comes of a forgiving kind.
 Why should I then repine at Heaven's decree,
 Which gives me no pretence to royalty?
 Yet Oh that Fate, propitiously inclined,
 Had raised my birth, or had debas'd my mind;
 To my large soul not all her treasure lent,
 And then betray'd it to a mean descent!
 I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,
 And David's part disdains my mother's mould.
 Why am I scanted by a niggard birth?
 My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth,
 And, made for empire, whispers me within,
 Desire of greatness is a godlike sin.
 Him staggering so when Hell's dire agent found,
 While fainting virtue scarce maintained her ground,
 He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies:
 'Th' eternal God, supremely good and wise,
 Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain;
 What wonders are reserved to bless your reign!
 Against your will your arguments have shown,
 Such virtue's only given to guide a throne.
 Not that your father's mildness I condemn;
 But manly force becomes the diadem.
 'Tis true, he grants the people all they crave,
 And more perhaps than subjects ought to have:
 For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame,
 And more his goodness than his wit proclaim.
 But when should people strive their bonds to break,
 If not when kings are negligent or weak?

collateral line having no legitimate child,
 Charles would be succeeded by his brother
 James

900 Let him give on till he can give no more,
 The thrifty Sanhedrin[†] shall keep him poor;
 And every shekel which he can receive
 Shall cost a limb of his prerogative.
 To ply him with new plots shall be my care,
 Or plunge him deep in some expensive war;
 Which when his treasure can no more supply,
 He must with the remains of kingship buy.
 His faithful friends, our jealousies and fears
 Call Jebusites, and Pharaoh's pensioners;
 Whom when our fury from his aid has torn,
 He shall be naked left to public scorn.
 The next successor, whom I fear and hate,
 My arts have made obnoxious to the State,
 Turn'd all his virtues to his overthrow,
 And gain'd our elders to pronounce a foe.
 His right, for sums of necessary gold,
 Shall first be pawn'd, and afterwards be sold;
 Till time shall ever-wanting David draw
 To pass your doubtful title into law.
 If not, the people have a right supreme
 To make their kings; for kings are made for them.
 All empire is no more than power in trust,
 Which, when resum'd, can be no longer just.
 Succession, for the general good designed,
 In its own wrong a nation cannot bind:
 If altering that the people can relieve,
 Better one suffer than a nation grieve.
 The Jews well know their power: ere Saul they chose,
 God was their King, and God they durst depose.
 Urge now your piety, your filial name,
 A father's right, and fear of future fame;
 The public good, that universal call,
 To which even Heaven submitted, answers all.
 Nor let his love enchant your generous mind;
 'Tis Nature's trick to propagate her kind.
 Our fond begotters, who would never die,
 Love but themselves in their posterity.
 Or let his kindness by th' effects be tried,
 Or let him lay his vain pretence aside.

Sanhedrin Jewish council, hence Parliament,
 which tried to limit royal power by restricting

votes of money. The 'elders' (404) were hostile
 to James

430 God said he loved your father; could he bring
 A better proof than to anoint him King?
 It surely showed he loved the shepherd well
 Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.
 Would David have you thought his darling son?
 What means he then, to alienate^t the crown?
 435 The name of godly he may blush to bear:
 'Tis after God's own heart to cheat his heir.
 He to his brother gives supreme command,
 To you a legacy of barren land;
 Perhaps th' old harp^t on which he thrums his lays,
 440 Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise.
 Then the next heir, a prince severe and wise,
 Already looks on you with jealous eyes;
 Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,
 And marks your progress in the people's hearts.
 445 Though now his mighty soul its grief contains,
 He meditates revenge who least complains;
 And like a lion, slumbering in the way,
 Or sleep dissembling, while he waits his prey,
 His fearless foes within his distance draws,
 450 Constrains his roaring and contracts his paws;
 Till at the last, his time for fury found,
 He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground,
 The prostrate vulgar passes o'er and spares,
 But with a lordly rage his hunters tears.
 455 Your case no tame expedients will afford;
 Resolve on death, or conquest by the sword,
 Which for no less a stake than life you draw;
 And self-defence is nature's eldest law.
 Leave the warm people no considering time,
 460 For then rebellion may be thought a crime.
 Prevail yourself of what occasion gives,
 But try your title while your father lives;
 And that your arms may have a fair pretence,
 Proclaim you take them in the King's defence;
 465 Whose sacred life each minute would expose
 To plots from seeming friends and secret foes.
 And who can sound the depth of David's soul?
 Perhaps his fear his kindness may control:
 He fears his brother, though he loves his son,

alienate transfer the title in property to another (James)

harp refers to the Psalms of David

400 For plighted vows too late to be undone.
 If so, by force he wishes to be gained,
 Like women's lechery, to seem constrained.
 Doubt not, but, when he most affects the frown,
 Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.
 405 Secure his person to secure your cause;
 They who possess the Prince, possess the laws.
 He said, and this advice above the rest
 With Absalom's mild nature suited best;
 Unblamed of life (ambition set aside),
 410 Not stained with cruelty, nor puffed with pride,
 How happy had he been, if Destiny
 Had higher placed his birth, or not so high!
 His kingly virtues might have claimed a throne,
 And blessed all other countries but his own;
 415 But charming greatness since so few refuse,
 'Tis juster to lament him than accuse.
 Strong were his hopes a rival to remove,
 With blandishments to gain the public love;
 To head the faction while their zeal was hot,
 420 And popularly prosecute the plot.
 To farther this, Achitophel unites
 The malcontents of all the Israelites,
 Whose differing parties he could wisely join,
 425 For several ends, to serve the same design:
 The best (and of the princes some were such),
 Who thought the power of monarchy too much;
 Mistaken men, and patriots in their hearts;
 Not wicked, but seduced by impious arts.
 430 By these the springs of property were bent,
 And wound so high, they cracked the government.
 The next for interest sought t'embroil the state,
 To sell their duty at a dearer rate;
 And make their Jewish markets of the throne,
 435 Pretending public good to serve their own.
 Others thought kings an useless heavy load,
 Who cost too much, and did too little good.
 These were for laying honest David by,
 On principles of pure good husbandry.
 440 With them joined all th' haranguers of the throng,
 That thought to get preferment by the tongue.
 Who follow next, a double danger bring,
 Not only hating David, but the King:

- The Solymaeen rout,[†] well versed of old
 In godly faction and in treason bold;
 Cowering and quaking at a conqueror's sword,
 But lofty to a lawful prince restored;
 Saw with disdain an ethnic[†] plot begun,
 And scorned by Jebusites to be undone.
 Hot Levites[†] headed these; who, pulled before
 From th' ark, which in the Judges' days they bore,
 Resumed their cant, and with a zealous cry
 Pursued their old beloved theocracy,
 Where Sanhedrin and priest enslaved the nation,
 And justified their spoils by inspiration;
 For who so fit for reign as Aaron's race,[†]
 If once dominion they could found in grace?
 These led the pack; though not of surest scent,
 Yet deepest mouthed against the government.
 A numerous host of dreaming saints[†] succeed
 Of the true old enthusiastic[†] breed:
 'Gainst form and order they their power employ,
 Nothing to build and all things to destroy.
 But far more numerous was the herd of such,
 Who think too little and who talk too much.
 These, out of mere instinct, they knew not why,
 Adored their fathers' God and property;
 And, by the same blind benefit of fate,
 The Devil and the Jebusite did hate;
 Born to be saved, even in their own despite,
 Because they could not help believing right.
 Such were the tools; but a whole Hydra[†] more
 Remains, of sprouting heads too long to score.
 Some of their chiefs were princes of the land:
 In the first rank of these did Zimri[†] stand:
 A man so various that he seemed to be
 Not one, but all mankind's epitome.
 Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
 Was everything by starts, and nothing long;

Solymaeen rout the London mob (Solyma was Jerusalem)
ethnic . . . Aaron's race Gentile, heathen;
 hence, Catholic. The opposing party of
Levites are Presbyterian clergy ejected by the
 Act of Uniformity (1662) from the privileges
 (ark) they enjoyed under the Commonwealth,
 when there was no monarch. In a theocracy,
 clergy (Aaron's race) rule in God's name
saints the elect, chosen for salvation (539)
enthusiasm self-deluded fanaticism
Hydra legendary monster which renewed its
 many heads when lopped
Zimri George Villiers (1628–87), 2nd Duke of
 Buckingham, wit, former minister, now in
 opposition. The Biblical Zimri is an
 adulterous and rebellious (Numbers 25;
 I Kings 16)

But, in the course of one revolving moon,
 Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
 Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
 Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
 Blest madman, who could every hour employ
 With something new to wish or to enjoy!
 Railing and praising were his usual themes,
 And both (to show his judgment) in extremes:
 So over violent, or over civil,
 That every man with him was God or Devil.
 In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:
 Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
 Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late;
 He had his jest, and they had his estate.
 He laughed himself from Court, then sought relief
 By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief;
 For, spite of him, the weight of business fell
 On Absalom and wise Achitophel:
 Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,
 He left not faction, but of that was left.

Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse
 Of lords below the dignity of verse.
 Wits, warriors, commonwealth's-men, were the best:
 Kind husbands and mere nobles all the rest.
 And therefore in the name of dullness be
 The well-hung Balaam[†] and cold Caleb[†] free;
 And canting Nadab[†] let oblivion damn,
 Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb.
 Let friendship's holy band some names assure;
 Some their own worth, and some let scorn secure.
 Nor shall the rascal rabble here have place,
 Whom kings no titles gave, and God no grace:
 Not bull-faced Jonas,[†] who could statutes draw
 To mean rebellion, and make treason law.
 But he, though bad, is followed by a worse,
 The wretch who Heaven's anointed dared to curse:
 Shimei,[†] whose youth did early promise bring
 Of zeal to God, and hatred to his King,

well-hung Balaam . . . Nadab the lustful Earl
 of Huntingdon (Numbers 22–4); Caleb, the
 Earl of Essex (Numbers 13–14); Nadab, Lord
 Howard of Escrick, republican and dissenter
 (Leviticus 10) – 1576 refers to his travesty of
 an Anglican service
Jonas Sir William Jones as Attorney General
 prosecuted 'Popish Plotters'
Shimei Slingsby Bethel (1617–97), republican
 merchant, who as a sheriff of London packed
 juries with Whigs to acquit royal enemies,
 including Shaftesbury

Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,
 And never broke the Sabbath, but for gain;
 Nor ever was he known an oath to vent,
 Or curse unless against the government.
 Thus heaping wealth by the most ready way
 Among the Jews, which was to cheat and pray,
 The city, to reward his pious hate
 Against his master, chose him magistrate:
 His hand a varet of justice did uphold;
 His neck was loaded with a chain of gold.
 During his office treason was no crime.
 The sons of Belial[†] had a glorious time:
 For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,
 Yet loved his wicked neighbour as himself.
 When two or three[†] were gathered to declaim
 Against the monarch of Jerusalem,
 Shimei was always in the midst of them;
 And, if they cursed the King when he was by,
 Would rather curse than break good company.
 If any durst his factious friends accuse,
 He packed a jury of dissenting Jews,
 Whose fellow-feeling in the godly cause
 Would free the suffering saint from human laws;
 For laws are only made to punish those
 Who serve the King, and to protect his foes.
 If any leisure time he had from power,
 (Because 'tis sin to misemploy an hour)
 His business was by writing to persuade
 That kings were useless, and a clog to trade;
 And, that his noble style he might refine,
 No Rechabite[†] more shunned the fumes of wine.
 Chaste were his cellars, and his shrieval* board
 The grossness of a city feast abhorred:
 His cooks with long disuse their trade forgot;
 Cool was his kitchen, though his brains were hot.
 Such frugal virtue malice may accuse,
 But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews:
 For towns once burnt such magistrates require
 As dare not tempt God's providence by fire.

ture wand of office
 sons of Belial evil, rebellious men
 two or three inverts the Biblical community
 of the faithful

Rechabite Rechab commanded his sons not to
 drink wine (Jeremiah 35)

With spiritual food he fed his servants well,
 Not free from flesh that made the Jews rebel;
 And Moses' laws he held in more account
 For forty days of fasting in the Mount.[†]
 To speak the rest, who better are forgot,
 Would tire a well-breathed witness of the Plot.
 Yet, Corah,[†] thou shalt from oblivion pass;
 Treat thyself, thou monumental brass,
 High as the serpent of thy metal made,
 While nations stand secure beneath thy shade.
 What though his birth were base, yet comets rise
 From earthy vapours ere they shine in skies.
 Prodigious actions may as well be done
 By weaver's issue as by prince's son.
 This arch-attester for the public good
 By that one deed ennobles all his blood.
 Who ever asked the witnesses' high race,
 Whose oath with martyrdom did Stephen[†] grace?
 Ours was a Levite, and as times went then,
 His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen.
 Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,
 Sure signs he neither cholerick was nor proud;
 His long chin proved his wit; his saintlike grace
 A church vermillion, and a Moses' face.
 His memory, miraculously great,
 Could plots, exceeding man's belief, repeat;
 Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
 For human wit could never such devise.
 Some future truths are mingled in his book;
 But where the witness failed, the prophet spoke:
 Some things like visionary flights appear;
 The spirit caught him up, the Lord knows where;
 And gave him his rabbinical degree,
 Unknown to foreign university.
 His judgment yet his memory did excel;
 Which pieced his wondrous evidence so well;
 And suited to the temper of the times,
 Then groaning under Jebusitic crimes.
 Let Israel's foes suspect his heavenly call,
 And rashly judge his writ apocryphal;

Mount Moses fasted forty days on Mount
 Sinai (Exodus 34)
 Corah Titus Oates (1649-1705), chief witness
 against the 'Popish Plot'; son of a weaver,
 he falsely claimed a degree from Salamanca
 University
 Stephen first Christian martyr, victim of false
 witness (Acts 6-7)

Our laws for such affronts have forfeits made:
He takes his life, who takes away his trade.

670 Were I myself in witness Corah's place,
The wretch who did me such a dire disgrace
Should whet my memory, though once forgot,
To make him an appendix of my plot.

675 His zeal to Heaven made him his Prince despise,
And load his person with indignities:
But zeal peculiar privilege affords,
Indulging latitude to deeds and words;
And Corah might for Agag's murder[†] call,
In terms as coarse as Samuel used to Saul.

680 What others in his evidence did join,
(The best that could be had for love or coin)
In Corah's own predicament will fall:
For *witness* is a common name to all.

Surrounded thus with friends of every sort,
Deluded Absalom forsakes the court;
Impatient of high hopes, urged with renown,
And fired with near possession of a crown.
685 Th' admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise,
And on his goodly person feed their eyes.
His joy concealed, he sets himself to show,
On each side bowing popularly low:

690 His looks, his gestures, and his words he frames,
And with familiar ease repeats their names.
Thus, formed by nature, furnished out with arts,
He glides unfelt into their secret hearts;
Then with a kind compassionating look,
And sighs, bespeaking pity ere he spoke,
Few words he said, but easy those and fit,
More slow than Hybla drops,[†] and far more sweet.

695 'I mourn, my countrymen, your lost estate,
Though far unable to prevent your fate:
Behold a banished man, for your dear cause
Exposed a prey to arbitrary laws!

700 Yet Oh! that I alone could be undone,
Cut off from empire, and no more a son!
Now all your liberties a spoil are made;
Egypt and Tyrus[†] intercept your trade,
And Jebusites your sacred rites invade.

Agag's murder uncertain: possibly Lord Stafford, an executed Catholic peer (I Samuel 15)
Hybla drops honey from Hybla in Sicily
Egypt and Tyrus France and Holland

100 My father, whom with reverence yet I name,
Charmed into ease, is careless of his fame;
And, bribed with petty sums of foreign gold,
Is grown in Bathsheba's[†] embraces old;
Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys,
And all his power against himself employs.
He gives, and let him give, my right away;
But why should he his own and yours betray?
105 He, only he, can make the nation bleed,
And he alone from my revenge is freed.

Take then my tears (with that he wiped his eyes),
'Tis all the aid my present power supplies:
No court informer can these arms accuse,
These arms may sons against their fathers use;
110 And 'tis my wish, the next successor's reign
May make no other Israelite complain.'

Youth, beauty, graceful action, seldom fail,
But common interest always will prevail;
And pity never ceases to be shown

115 'To him who makes the people's wrongs his own.
The crowd (that still believe their kings oppress)
With lifted hands their young Messiah bless,
Who now begins his progress[†] to ordain
With chariots, horsemen, and a numerous train;
From east to west his glories he displays,
And, like the sun, the promised land surveys.

120 Fame runs before him as the morning star,
And shouts of joy salute him from afar;
Each house receives him as a guardian god,
And consecrates the place of his abode;
But hospitable treats did most commend
Wise Issachar,[†] his wealthy western friend.

125 This moving court, that caught the people's eyes,
And seemed but pomp, did other ends disguise:
Achitophel had formed it, with intent
To sound the depths, and fathom, where it went,
The people's hearts, distinguish friends from foes,
And try their strength before they came to blows.
130 Yet all was coloured with a smooth pretence
Of specious love, and duty to their prince.

Bathsheba Duchess of Portsmouth, the king's mistress, possibly a French agent (II Samuel 11)
progress . . . *Issachar* a public journey in 1680 in the west of England, where he visited Thomas Thynne (*Issachar*) in Wiltshire

Religion, and redress of grievances,
 Two names that always cheat and always please,
 Are often urged; and good King David's life
 Endangered by a brother[†] and a wife.
 Thus, in a pageant show, a plot is made,
 And peace itself is war in masquerade.
 Oh foolish Israel! never warned by ill,
 Still the same bait, and circumvented still!
 Did ever men forsake their present ease,
 In midst of health imagine a disease,
 Take pains contingent mischiefs to foresee,
 Make heirs for monarchs, and for God decree?
 What shall we think? Can people give away,
 Both for themselves and sons, their native sway?
 Then they are left defenceless to the sword
 Of each unbounded, arbitrary lord;
 And laws are vain, by which we right enjoy,
 If kings unquestioned can those laws destroy.
 Yet, if the crowd be judge of fit and just,
 And kings are only officers in trust,
 Then this resuming covenant[†] was declared
 When kings were made, or is for ever barred.
 If those who gave the sceptre could not tie
 By their own deed their own posterity,
 How then could Adam bind his future race?
 How could his forfeit[†] on mankind take place?
 Or how could heavenly justice damn us all
 Who ne'er consented to our father's fall?
 Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,
 And tenants to their people's pleasure stand.
 Add, that the power for property allowed,
 Is mischievously seated in the crowd;
 For who can be secure of private right,
 If sovereign sway may be dissolved by might?
 Nor is the people's judgment always true:
 The most may err as grossly as the few;
 And faultless kings run down, by common cry,
 For vice, oppression, and for tyranny.

brother James and the queen were both
accused of plots against Charles
resuming covenant agreement that the people
 can take back the control of the succession

forfeit human inheritance of Adam's original
 sin

What standard is there in a fickle rout,
 Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out?
 Nor only crowds, but Sanhedrins may be
 Infected with this public lunacy;
 And share the madness of rebellious times,
 To murder monarchs for imagined crimes.
 If they may give and take when'er they please,
 Not kings alone (the Godhead's images),
 But government itself at length must fall
 To nature's state, where all have right to all.
 Yet, grant our lords the people kings can make,
 What prudent men a settled throne would shake?
 For whatsoe'er their sufferings were before,
 That change they covet makes them suffer more.
 All other errors but disturb a state,
 But innovation is the blow of fate.
 If ancient fabrics nod, and threat to fall,
 To patch the flaws and buttress up the wall,
 Thus far 'tis duty; but here fix the mark,
 For all beyond it is to touch our ark.[†]
 To change foundations, cast the frame anew,
 Is work for rebels who base ends pursue;
 At once divine and human laws control,
 And mend the parts by ruin of the whole.
 The tampering world is subject to this curse,
 To physic their disease into a worse.
 Now what relief can righteous David bring?
 How fatal 'tis to be too good a king!
 Friends he has few, so high the madness grows;
 Who dare be such must be the people's foes.
 Yet some there were, even in the worst of days;
 Some let me name, and naming is to praise.
 In this short file Barzillai[†] first appears;
 Barzillai, crowned with honour and with years;
 Long since, the rising rebels he withstood
 In regions waste, beyond the Jordan's flood;
 Unfortunately brave to buoy the state,
 But sinking underneath his master's fate.
 In exile with his godlike prince he mourned,

touch our ark commit sacrilege by touching
 the Ark of the Covenant
Barzillai James Butler, Duke of Ormonde

(1610–88), loyal in Ireland to Charles I and
 II

- For him he suffered, and with him returned.
 The court he practised, not the courtier's art;
 Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart,
 Which well the noblest objects knew to choose,
 The fighting warrior, and recording Muse.
 His bed could once a fruitful issue boast;
 Now more than half a father's name is lost.
 His eldest hope, with every grace adorned,
 By me (so Heaven will have it) always mourned,
 And always honoured, snatched in manhood's prime
 By unequal fates, and Providence's crime:
 Yet not before the goal of honour won,
 All parts fulfilled of subject and of son;
 Swift was the race, but short the time to run.
 Oh narrow circle, but of power divine,
 Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line!
 By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known;
 Arms thy delight, and war was all thy own;
 Thy force, infused, the fainting Tyrians[†] propped,
 And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopped.
 Oh ancient honour! oh unconquered hand,
 Whom foes unpunished never could withstand!
 But Israel was unworthy of thy name:
 Short is the date of all immoderate fame.
 It looks as Heaven our ruin had designed,
 And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind.
 Now, free from earth, thy disencumbered soul
 Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry pole:
 From thence thy kindred legions mayest thou bring
 To aid the guardian angel of thy King.
 Here stop, my Muse, here cease thy painful flight;
 No pinions can pursue immortal height:
 Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,
 And tell thy soul she should have fled before;
 Or fled she with his life, and left this verse
 To hang on her departed patron's hearse?
 Now take thy steepy flight from heaven, and see
 If thou canst find on earth another *he*;
 Another he would be too hard to find;
 See then whom thou canst see not far behind:
 Zadoc[†] the priest, whom, shunning power and place,

Tyrians the Dutch
Zadoc William Sancroft, Archbishop of
 Canterbury

His lowly mind advanced to David's grace;
 With him the Sagan[†] of Jerusalem,
 Of hospitable soul and noble stem;
 Him of the western dome,[†] whose weighty sense
 Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence.
 The Prophets' sons, by such example led,
 To learning and to loyalty were bred:
 For colleges on bounteous kings depend,
 And never rebel was to arts a friend.
 To these succeed the pillars of the laws,
 Who best could plead, and best can judge a cause.
 Next them a train of loyal peers ascend:
 Sharp-judging Adriel,[†] the Muses' friend,
 Himself a Muse — in Sanhedrin's debate
 True to his Prince, but not a slave of state;
 Whom David's love with honours did adorn,
 That from his disobedient son were torn.
 Iotham[†] of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
 Endued by nature, and by learning taught
 To move assemblies, who but only tried
 The worse a while, then chose the better side;
 Nor chose alone, but turned the balance too,
 So much the weight of one brave man can do.
 Hushai,[†] the friend of David in distress,
 In public storms of manly steadfastness;
 By foreign treaties he informed his youth,
 And joined experience to his native truth.
 His frugal care supplied the wanting throne,
 Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own:
 'Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow,
 But hard the task to manage well the low;
 For sovereign power is too depressed or high,
 When kings are forced to sell or crowds to buy.
 Indulge one labour more, my weary Muse,
 For Amiel,[†] who can Amiel's praise refuse?
 Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet
 In his own worth, and without title great:
 The Sanhedrin long time as chief he ruled,

Jotham (priest) is Henry Compton, Bishop of
 London
Jotham George Savile, Marquess of Halifax,
 opposed Shaftesbury in the House of Lords
Hushai Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester
Amiel Edmond Seymour, Speaker of the
 House of Commons
Adriel John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, poet
 and patron of Dryden

Their reason guided, and their passion cooled;
 So dexterous was he in the Crown's defence,
 So formed to speak a loyal nation's sense,
 That, as their band was Israel's tribes in small,
 So fit was he to represent them all.
 Now rasher charioteers the seat ascend,
 Whose loose careers his steady skill commend:
 They, like th' unequal ruler¹ of the day,
 Misguide the seasons and mistake the way,
 While he, withdrawn, at their mad labour smiles,
 And safe enjoys the sabbath of his toils.
 These were the chief, a small but faithful band
 Of worthies, in the breach who dared to stand
 And tempt th' united fury of the land.
 With grief they viewed such powerful engines bent
 To batter down the lawful government:
 A numerous faction, with pretended frights,
 In Sanhedrins to plume the regal rights;
 The true successor from the Court removed;
 The plot by hireling witnesses improved.
 These ills they saw, and, as their duty bound,
 They showed the King the danger of the wound:
 That no concessions from the throne would please,
 But lenitives fomented² the disease;
 That Absalom, ambitious of the crown,
 Was made the lure to draw the people down;
 That false Achitophel's pernicious hate
 Had turned the plot to ruin Church and State;
 The council violent, the rabble worse;
 That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse.
 With all these loads of injuries oppressed,
 And long revolving in his careful breast
 Th' event of things, at last his patience tired,
 Thus from his royal throne, by Heaven inspired,
 The godlike David spoke³: with awful fear
 His train their Maker in their master hear.
 'Thus long have I, by native mercy swayed,
 My wrongs dissembled, my revenge delayed:
 So willing to forgive th' offending age,
 So much the father did the king assuage.

unequal ruler Phaeon was unable to control the chariot of his father, the sun god, Apollo
lenitives fomented soothing medicines only increased the heat of

Sanctum killed as he shook the pillars of the Philistine house (Judges 16)
old instructor Achitophel/Shafesbury
Esau's hands Jacob attempted to deceive his

But now so far my clemency they slight,
 Th' offenders question my forgiving right.
 That one was made for many, they contend;
 But 'tis to rule, for that's a monarch's end.
 They call my tenderness of blood my fear,
 Though manly tempers can the longest bear.
 Yet, since they will divert my native course,
 'Tis time to show I am not good by force.
 Those heaped affronts that haughty subjects bring
 Are burdens for a camel, not a King.
 Kings are the public pillars of the State,
 Born to sustain and prop the nation's weight:
 If my young Samson⁴ will pretend a call
 To shake the column, let him share the fall.
 But Oh that yet he would repent and live!
 How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!
 With how few tears a pardon might be won
 From nature, pleading for a darling son!
 Poor pitted youth, by my paternal care
 Raised up to all the height his frame could bear!
 Had God ordained his fate for empire born,
 He would have given his soul another turn:
 Gulled with a patriot's name, whose modern sense
 Is, one that would by law supplant his prince;
 The people's brave, the politician's tool;
 Never was patriot yet but was a fool.
 Whence comes it that religion and the laws
 Should more be Absalom's than David's cause?
 His old instructor,⁵ ere he lost his place,
 Was never thought ended with so much grace.
 Good heavens, how faction can a patriot paint!
 My rebel ever proves my people's saint.
 Would *they* impose an heir upon the throne?
 Let Sanhedrins be taught to give their own.
 A King's at least a part of government,
 And mine as requisite as their consent:
 Without my leave a future King to choose,
 Infers a right the present to depose.
 True, they petition me t' approve their choice;
 But Esau's hands⁶ suit ill with Jacob's voice.

blind father by simulating the hairy hands of his elder brother, Esau, with goatskin, to win his blessing (Genesis 27)

My pious subjects for my safety pray,
 Which to secure they take my power away.
 From plots and treasons Heaven preserve my years,
 But save me most from my petitioners:
 Unsatiated as the barren womb or grave;
 God cannot grant so much as they can crave.
 What then is left but with a jealous eye
 To guard the small remains of royalty?
 The law shall still direct my peaceful sway,
 And the same law teach rebels to obey;
 Votes shall no more established power control,
 Such votes as make a part exceed the whole:
 No groundless clamours shall my friends remove,
 Nor crowds have power to punish ere they prove;
 For gods and godlike kings their care express,
 Still to defend their servants in distress.
 Oh that my power to saving were confined!
 Why am I forced, like Heaven, against my mind,
 To make examples of another kind?
 Must I at length the sword of justice draw?
 Oh cursed effects of necessary law!
 How ill my fear they by my mercy scan:
 Beware the fury of a patient man.
 Law they require, let law then show her face:
 They could not be content to look on grace,
 Her hinder parts,[†] but with a daring eye
 To tempt the terror of her front, and die.
 By their own arts, 'tis righteously decreed,
 Those dire artificers of death shall bleed.
 Against themselves their witnesses will swear
 Till, viper-like,[†] their mother plot they tear,
 And suck for nutriment that bloody gore
 Which was their principle of life before.
 Their Belial[†] with their Belzebub will fight;
 Thus on my foes, my foes shall do me right.
 Nor doubt th' event; for factious crowds engage
 In their first onset all their brutal rage.
 Then let 'em take an unresisted course,
 Retire and traverse, and delude their force:

her hinder parts as no man might safely see
 God's 'front', face (Exodus 33)
 viper-like vipers traditionally devour their
 mother in the birth-process
 Belial with Belzebub, among the evil fallen
 angels in *Paradise Lost*, II

But when they stand all breathless, urge the fight,
 And rise upon 'em with redoubled might:
 For lawful power is still superior found;
 When long driven back, at length it stands the ground.[†]
 He said. Th' Almighty, nodding, gave consent;
 And peals of thunder shook the firmament.
 Henceforth a series of new time[†] began,
 The mighty years in long procession ran:
 Once more the godlike David was restored,
 And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

1681

MAC FLECKNOE

All human things are subject to decay,
 And when fate summons, monarchs must obey:
 This Flecknoe[†] found, who, like Augustus,[†] young
 Was called to empire, and had governed long;
 In prose and verse was owned, without dispute,
 Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.
 This aged Prince, now flourishing in peace,
 And blest with issue of a large increase,
 Worn out with business, did at length debate
 To settle the succession of the State;
 And pondering which of all his sons was fit
 To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
 Cried: 'Tis resolved! For nature pleads that he
 Should only rule, who most resembles me.
 Sh — — — alone my perfect image bears,
 Mature in dullness from his tender years;
 Sh — — — alone, of all my sons, is he
 Who stands confirmed in full stupidity;

new time recalls a famous prophecy of
 renovation in the fourth *Eclogue* of the
 Roman poet Virgil (70–19 bc)
 Flecknoe Richard Flecknoe, priest, minor poet
 and dramatist, died c. 1678. Dryden presents
 as his chosen successor ('Mac') to the throne
 of dullness Thomas Shadwell (1640–92). The

allusive mock-heroic manner is an ironic
 comment on Shadwell's talents; a Whig, he
 succeeded Dryden as Poet Laureate in 1689.
 The poem is the seed of Pope's *Dunciad*
Augustus Octavius became the first Roman
 emperor aged 32, and ruled 45 years

- 20 The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Sh — — — never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through and make a lucid interval;
But Sh — — —'s genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
25 Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems designed for thoughtless majesty:
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood[†] and Shirley were but types of thee,
30 Thou last great prophet of tautology.
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And coarsely clad in Norwich druggel[†] came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.
35 My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung
When to King John[†] of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,
With well-timed oars before the royal barge,
40 Swelled with the pride of thy celestial charge;
And big with hymn, commander of an host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets[†] tossed.
Methinks I see the new Arion[†] sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
45 At thy well-sharpened thumb from shore to shore
The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar:
Echoes from Pissing Alley[†] Sh — — — call,
And Sh — — — they resound from Aston Hall.
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
50 As at the morning toast* that floats along.
Sometimes as prince of thy harmonious band
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.
St. André's[†] feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not even the feet of thy own *Psyche*'s rhyme:

sewage

Heywood Thomas Heywood (c. 1574–1641)
and James Shirley (1596–1666), old-fashioned dramatists, are precursors of Shadwell, as Flecknoe is John the Baptist to his Christ (l.32: see Matthew 3)
druggel coarse woollen cloth from Shadwell's native Norfolk
King John Flecknoe claimed the patronage of the Portuguese king
Epsom blankets refers to blanket-tossing in Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* and to his *Epsom Wells*
Arion legendary Greek, whose music charmed dolphins
Pissing Alley a real street near the river; Aston Hall is obscure
St. André French choreographer of Shadwell's opera *Psyche* (1675)

- Though they in number as in sense excel,
So just, so like tautology, they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton[†] forswore
The lute and sword which he in triumph bore,
And vowed he ne'er would act Villierius[†] more.
Here stopped the good old sire, and wept for joy
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed dullness he was made.
Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind,
(The fair Augusta[†] much to fears inclined)
An ancient fabric, raised t'inform the sight,
There stood of yore, and Barbican[†] it hight*:
A watchtower once; but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains.
From its old ruins brothel-houses rise,
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys;
Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep,
And, undisturbed by watch, in silence sleep.
Near these a nursery[†] erects its head,
Where queens are formed, and future heroes bred;
Where unfledged actors learn to laugh and cry,
Where infant punks* their tender voices try,
And little Maximins[†] the gods defy.
Great Fletcher[†] never treads in buskins[†] here,
Nor greater Jonson[†] dares in socks[†] appear.
But gentle Simkin[†] just reception finds
Amidst this monument of vanished minds:
Pure clinches* the suburban Muse affords,
And Panton[†] waging harmless war with words.
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously designed his Sh — — —'s throne;
For ancient Dekker[†] prophesied long since,
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit and flail of sense:

puns

whores

was called

Singleton a royal musician
Villierius character in Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes* (1656)
Augusta ancient name for London
Barbican then a decayed area
nursery young actors' training ground
Maximins Maximin was a ranting character in Dryden's own *Tyrannic Love* (1669)
Fletcher . . . socks John Fletcher (1579–1625); Ben Jonson (1572–1637): dramatists. *Buskin* and sock are the traditional footwear in tragedy and comedy
Simkin a farcical character
Panton may be another farcical character
Dekker Thomas Dekker (c. 1570–1632), dramatist

- 90 To whom true dullness should some *Psyches* owe,
But worlds of Misers[†] from his pen should flow;
Humorists and *Hypocrites* it should produce,
Whole Raymond families, and tribes of Bruce.[†]
- 95 Now Empress Fame had published the renown
Of Sh — — 's coronation through the town.
Roused by report of Fame, the nations meet,
From near Bunhill and distant Watling Street.
No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,
But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay:
100 From dusty shops neglected authors come,
Martyrs of pies,[†] and relics of the bum.
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogilby[†] there lay,
But loads of Sh — — almost choked the way.
Bilked stationers* for yeomen stood prepared,
105 And H — — was captain of the guard.
The hoary Prince in majesty appeared,
High on a throne of his own labours reared.
At his right hand our young Ascanius[†] sate,
Rome's other hope, and pillar of the State.
110 His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
And lambent dullness played around his face.
As Hannibal[†] did to the altars come,
Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;
So Sh — — swore, nor should his vow be vain,
115 That he till death true dullness would maintain;
And in his father's right, and realm's defence,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
The King himself the sacred unction[†] made,
As King by office, and as priest by trade:
120 In his sinister hand, instead of ball,[†]
He placed a mighty mug of potent ale;
Love's Kingdom[†] to his right he did convey,
At once his sceptre and his rule of sway;
Whose righteous lore the prince had practised young,
125 And from whose loins recorded *Psyche* sprung.

Misers . . . *Bruce* plays by Shadwell, and characters from them
pies waste paper lined baking dishes or served in privies
Ogilby John Ogilby (1600–76), in Dryden's view a bad poet and translator. Henry Herringman published plays by Shadwell and Dryden
Ascanius son of the hero of Virgil's epic
Aeneid: Book II is parodied here
Hannibal Carthaginian hero, sworn to be a foe to Rome when aged nine
unction oil used at coronation ceremony, which is further parodied in *ball* (monarch's orb)
Love's Kingdom a play by Flecknoe

- His temples last with poppies[†] were o'erspread,
That nodding seemed to consecrate his head.
Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
100 So Romulus,[†] 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook,
Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
Th' admiring throng loud acclamations make,
And omens of his future empire take.
The sire then shook the honours of his head,
105 And from his brows damps of oblivion shed
Full on the filial dullness: long he stood,
Repelling from his breast the raging god;[†]
At length burst out in this prophetic mood:
'Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign
110 To far Barbados on the western main;
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne.
Beyond *Love's Kingdom* let him stretch his pen.'
He paused, and all the people cried, 'Amen.'
115 Then thus continued he: 'My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let others teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let *Virtuosos* in five years be writ,
120 Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
Let gentle George[†] in triumph tread the stage,
Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling charm the pit,
And in their folly show the writer's wit.
125 Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence,
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dullness, and desire no foreign aid:
That they to future ages may be known,
130 Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.
Nay let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and differing but in name;

poppies sleep-inducing; but Shadwell also used opium
Romulus founder of Rome; owls suggest unheroic darkness
raging god Flecknoe is possessed, in a parody of epic prophecy
George Sir George Etherege (c. 1635–91), a truly witty dramatist, creator of the characters listed

- But let no alien S-dl-y^t interpose
To lard with wit thy hungry *Epsom* prose.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst cull,
Trust nature, do not labour to be dull;
But write thy best, and top; and in each line
Sir Formal's^t oratory will be thine;
Sir Formal, though unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications fill.
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
By arrogating Jonson's hostile name.
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
And uncle Ogilby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part;
What share have we in nature or in art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince Nicander's^t vein,
Or swept the dust in *Psyche's* humble strain?
Where sold he bargains, "whip-stitch, kiss my arse,"
Promised a play and dwindled to a farce?
When did his muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
As thou whole Etheridge dost transfuse to thine?
But so transfused as oil on water's flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humours to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way, to dullness, 'tis inclined,
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And in all changes that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence
Of likeness; thine's a tympany^t of sense.
A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin^t of wit.
Like mine thy gentle numbers feebly creep,
Thy tragic muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.
With whate'er gall thou settest thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite.

S-dl-y Sir Charles Sedley (1638–1701), playwright, gave *Epsom Wells* at least its prologue
Sir Formal Sir Formal Trifle, a florid orator in *The Virtuoso*
Nicander Prince Nicander is in *Psyche*. The low language of l.181 is an example from Shadwell of 'selling a bargain' – giving an unexpected coarse reply
tympany Shadwell's large but empty belly
kilderkin small cask

In thy felonious heart though venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish^t pen and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics,[†] but mild anagram:
I leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display[†] and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.
Or if thou wouldst thy different talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute.
He said; but his last words were scarcely heard,
For Bruce and Longvil[†] had a trap prepared,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugged robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle[†] fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

c. 1678

1682

TO THE MEMORY OF MR OLDHAM[†]

Farewell, too little and too lately known,
Whom I began to think and call my own;
For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike:
To the same goal did both our studies drive;
The last set out the soonest did arrive.
Thus Nisus[†] fell upon the slippery place,
While his young friend performed and won the race.

Irish neither poet was Irish, but it suggested barbarousness
keen iambics sharp satire
display George Herbert's *Easter Wings* and *The Altar* (1633) take the shape of their subjects
Bruce and Longvil characters who drop Sir Formal Trifle through a trapdoor
mantle parodies the succession of Elisha, as a whirlwind carries the prophet Elijah to heaven (II Kings 2)

To the memory of Mr Oldham John Oldham (1653–83), author of *Satires upon the Jesuits*, probably met Dryden within the two years before his early death. The allusions recall classical laments for promise cut short
Nisus Virgil tells in *Aeneid*, V. 315–19 how Nisus slipped in a pool of blood, and his friend Euryalus won

O early ripe! to thy abundant store
 What could advancing age have added more?
 It might (what nature never gives the young)
 Have taught the numbers[†] of thy native tongue.
 But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
 Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line;
 A noble error, and but seldom made,
 When poets are by too much force betrayed.
 Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere their prime,
 Still showed a quickness; and maturing time
 But mellowed what we write to the dull sweets of rhyme.
 Once more, hail and farewell;[†] farewell, thou young,
 But ah too short, Marcellus[†] of our tongue;
 Thy brows with ivy, and with laurels[†] bound;
 But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

1684

A SONG FOR ST CECILIA'S DAY, 1687[†]

I

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
 This universal frame[†] began.
 When Nature underneath a heap
 Of jarring atoms lay,
 And could not heave her head,
 The tuneful voice was heard from high:
 'Arise, ye more than dead.'
 Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
 In order to their stations leap,
 And music's power obey.
 From harmony, from heavenly harmony

numbers versification (often 'harsh' in earlier satire)

hail and farewell translates a phrase, *ave atque vale*, from the elegy to his brother by the Roman poet, Catullus (c. 84–c. 54 bc)

Marcellus another Roman, prematurely dead; nephew of Augustus, commemorated in *Aeneid*, VI

laurels the traditional wreath of the poet

A Song for St Cecilia's Day The patroness of music was regularly commemorated by odes on 22 November. This was set to music by Draghi and later by Handel. It touches the traditional themes of the harmony of creation and the emotional power of music
frame the universe divinely created from the elements of chaos (1.8)

This universal frame began:
 From harmony to harmony
 Through all the compass* of the notes it ran,
 The diapason[†] closing full in man.

range

II

What passion cannot music raise and quell!
 When Jubal[†] struck the corded shell,
 His listening brethren stood around,
 And wondering, on their faces fell
 To worship that celestial sound.
 Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
 Within the hollow of that shell
 That spoke so sweetly and so well.
 What passion cannot music raise and quell!

III

The trumpet's loud clangour
 Excites us to arms
 With shrill notes of anger
 And mortal alarms.
 The double double double beat
 Of the thundering drum
 Cries: 'Hark! the foes come;
 Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.'

IV

The soft complaining flute
 In dying notes discovers
 The woes of hopeless lovers,
 Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

V

Sharp violins proclaim
 Their jealous pangs, and desperation,
 Fury, frantic indignation,
 Depth of pains, and height of passion,
 For the fair, disdainful dame.

VI

But oh! what art can teach,
 What human voice can reach,

diapason concord of an octave

Jubal father of music (Genesis 4), with a strung shell

The sacred organ's praise?

- 45 Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

VII

Orpheus[†] could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,

- 50 Sequacious* of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher;
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres[†] began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above;

- 60 So, when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet[†] shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And music shall untune the sky.

1688

LINES ON MILTON

Three poets,[†] in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next in majesty; in both the last.

Orpheus legendary for his musical power over nature; Cecilia's music can affect even angels
spheres traditionally, the spheres carrying the planets moved to music
trumpet the last trump will announce the end of the world
Three poets Homer, Virgil, Milton, masters respectively of Greek, Latin and modern (1608–74) English epic poetry

The force of Nature could no farther go:
To make a third she joined the former two.

1688

TO MY HONOURED KINSMAN JOHN DRIDEN[†]

How blessed is he who leads a country life,
Unvexed with anxious cares, and void of strife!
Who, studying peace and shunning civil rage,
Enjoyed his youth, and now enjoys his age:
All who deserve his love, he makes his own;

- And, to be loved himself, needs only to be known.
Just, good, and wise, contending neighbours come,
From your award to wait their final doom;*
And, foes before, return in friendship home.
Without their cost, you terminate the cause,
And save th' expense of long litigious laws,
Where suits are traversed, and so little won,
That he who conquers is but last undone:
Such are not your decrees; but so designed,
The sanction leaves a lasting peace behind;
Like your own soul, serene: a pattern of your mind.

judgement

- Promoting concord, and composing strife,
Lord of yourself, uncumbered with a wife;
Where, for a year, a month, perhaps a night,
Long penitence succeeds a short delight:
Minds are so hardly matched, that even the first,
Though paired by Heaven, in Paradise were cursed,
For man and woman, though in one they grow,
Yet, first or last, return again to two.
He to God's image, she to his was made;
So, farther from the fount, the stream at random straved.
How could he stand, when, put to double pain,
He must a weaker than himself sustain?

To my Honoured Kinsman John Driden the poet's cousin (1635–1708) was an MP (1.121).
The praise of rural independence owes much to the Roman poet Horace

- Each might have stood perhaps, but each alone;
 Two wrestlers help to pull each other down.
 Not that my verse would blemish all the fair;
 But yet if *some* be bad, 'tis wisdom to beware;
 And better shun the bait, than struggle in the snare.
 Thus have you shunned, and shun the married state,
 Trusting as little as you can to fate.
 No porter guards the passage of your door,
 T'admit the wealthy, and exclude the poor;
 For God, who gave the riches, gave the heart
 To sanctify the whole, by giving part.
 Heaven, who foresaw the will, the means has wrought,
 And to the second son a blessing brought:
 The first-begotten had his father's share;
 But you, like Jacob, ^t are Rebecca's heir.
 So may your stores and fruitful fields increase;
 And ever be you blessed, who live to bless.
 As Ceres^t sowed, where'er her chariot flew;
 As Heaven in deserts rained the bread of dew,
 So free to many, to relations most,
 You feed with manna^t your own Israel host.
 With crowds attended of your ancient race,
 You seek the champaign^t sports, or sylvan chase;
 With well-breathed beagles you surround the wood,
 Even then industrious of the common good;
 And often have you brought the wily fox
 To suffer for the firstlings of the flocks;
 Chased even amid the folds, and made to bleed,
 Like felons, where they did the murderous deed.
 This fiery game your active youth maintained;
 Not yet by years extinguished, though restrained:
 You season still with sports your serious hours;
 For age but tastes of pleasures, youth devours.
 The hare in pastures or in plains is found,
 Emblem of human life, who runs the round;
 And after all his wandering ways are done,
 His circle fills, and ends where he begun,
 Just as the setting meets the rising sun.
 Thus princes ease their cares; but happier he
 Who seeks not pleasure through necessity,

Jacob John, the younger son, inherited an estate through his mother (see Genesis 27)
Ceres Roman goddess of corn
manna 16) Israelites' food in wilderness (Exodus 16)
champaign open fields

- Than such as once on slippery thrones were placed;
 And chasing, sigh to think themselves are chased.
 So lived our sires, ere doctors learned to kill,
 And multiplied with theirs the weekly bill,^t
 The first physicians by debauch were made;
 Excess began and sloth sustains the trade.
 Pity the generous kind their cares bestow
 To search forbidden truths (a sin to know),
 To which if human science could attain,
 The doom of death, pronounced by God, were vain.
 In vain the leech would interpose delay;
 Fate fastens first, and vindicates^t the prey.
 What help from art's endeavours can we have?
 Gibbons^t but guesses, nor is sure to save;
 But Maurus^t sweeps whole parishes, and peoples every grave;
 And no more mercy to mankind will use,
 Than when he robbed and murdered Maro's^t muse.
 Would'st thou be soon dispatched, and perish whole?
 Trust Maurus^t with thy life, and M-lb—rne with thy soul.
 By chase our long-lived fathers earned their food;
 Toil strung the nerves, and purified the blood:
 But we their sons, a pampered race of men,
 Are dwindled down to threescore years and ten.
 Better to hunt in fields for health unbought
 Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.
 The wise, for cure, on exercise depend;
 God never made his work for man to mend.
 The tree of knowledge, once in Eden placed,
 Was easy found, but was forbid the taste:
 O had our grandsire^t walked without his wife,
 He first had sought the better plant of life!
 Now, both are lost: yet, wandering in the dark,
 Physicians, for the tree, have found the bark.
 They, labouring for relief of human kind,
 With sharpened sight some remedies may find;
 Th' apothecary-train is wholly blind.
 From files a random recipe they take,
 And many deaths of one prescription make.

bill of mortality: death statistics
indicates takes vengeance on
Gibbons Dryden's doctor
Maurus Sir Richard Blackmore (1654–1729),
 doctor and dull epic poet (Maro – Virgil –
 represents true epic). He and Milbourne, a
 clergyman, had attacked Dryden
grandsire Adam (Genesis 2.3)

Garth, [†] generous as his Muse, prescribes and gives;
 The shopman sells, and by destruction lives:
 Ungrateful tribe! who, like the viper's brood,
 From medicine issuing, suck their mother's blood!
 Let these obey, and let the learned prescribe,
 That men may die without a double bribe:
 Let them but under their superiors kill,
 When doctors first have signed the bloody bill:
 He 'scapes the best who, nature to repair,
 Draws physic from the fields, in draughts of vital air.
 You hoard not health for your own private use,
 But on the public spend the rich produce;
 When, often urged, unwilling to be great,
 Your country calls you from your loved retreat,
 And sends to senates, charged with common care,
 Which none more shuns, and none can better bear.
 Where could they find another formed so fit,
 To poise with solid sense a sprightly wit?
 Were these both wanting (as they both abound),
 Where could so firm integrity be found?
 Well born, and wealthy, wanting no support,
 You steer betwixt the country and the court;
 Nor gratify whate'er the great desire,
 Nor grudging give what public needs require.
 Part must be left, a fund when foes invade,
 And part employed to roll the watery trade:
 Even Canaan's [†] happy land, when worn with toil,
 Required a sabbath [†] year to mend the meagre soil.
 Good senators (and such are you) so give,
 That kings may be supplied, the people thrive:
 And he, when want requires, is truly wise,
 Who slights not foreign aids, nor overbuys;
 But on our native strength, in time of need, relies.
 Munster was bought, we boast not the success;
 Who fights for gain, for greater makes his peace.
 Our foes, compelled by need, have peace [†] embraced;
 The peace both parties want is like to last:
 Which if secure, securely we may trade;
 Or, not secure, should never have been made.
 Safe in ourselves, while on ourselves we stand,

Garth Sir Samuel Garth (1661–1719), doctor and burlesque poet (*The Dispensary*)
 Canaan Jews' promised land
 sabbath one rest period in seven (Leviticus 25)
 peace a long war against France ended in the
 Peace of Ryswick (1697)

The sea is ours, and that defends the land.
 Be, then, the naval stores the nation's care,
 New ships to build, and battered to repair.
 Observe the war, in every annual course;
 What has been done, was done with British force:
 Namur subdued is England's palm alone;
 The rest besieged, but we constrained the town:
 We saw th' event that followed our success;
 France, though pretending arms, pursued the peace,
 Obligated, by one sole treaty, to restore
 What twenty years of war had won before.
 Enough for Europe has our Albion fought;
 Let us enjoy the peace our blood has bought.
 When once the Persian king was put to flight,
 The weary Macedons refused to fight;
 Themselves their own mortality confessed,
 And left the son of Jove[†] to quarrel for the rest.
 Even victors are by victories undone;
 Thus Hannibal, [†] with foreign laurels won,
 To Carthage was recalled, too late to keep his own.
 While sore of battle, while our wounds are green,
 Why should we tempt the doubtful die again?
 In wars renewed, uncertain of success;
 Sure of a share, as umpires of the peace.
 A patriot both the king and country serves;
 Prerogative and privilege preserves:
 Of each our laws the certain limit show;
 One must not ebb, nor t'other overflow.
 Betwixt the prince and parliament we stand;
 The barriers of the state on either hand:
 May neither overflow, for then they drown the land.
 When both are full, they feed our blessed abode;
 Like those that watered once the paradise of God.
 Some overpoise of sway by turns they share;
 In peace the people, and the prince in war;
 Consuls[†] of moderate power in calms were made;
 When the Gauls came, one sole dictator[†] swayed.
 Patriots, in peace, assert the people's right,
 With noble stubbornness resisting might:
 No lawless mandates from the court receive,

son of Jove Alexander the Great, of Macedon
 (356–323 BC)
 Hannibal appointed joint leaders of Rome; in
 crisis, replaced by a single dictator
 leading general against Rome

Nor lend by force, but in a body give.
 Such was your generous grandsire, † free to grant
 In parliaments that weighed their prince's want:
 But so tenacious of the common cause,
 As not to lend the king against his laws;
 And, in a loathsome dungeon doomed to lie,
 In bonds retained his birthright liberty,
 And shamed oppression, till it set him free.
 O true descendant of a patriot line,
 Who, while thou sharest their lustre, lendest 'em thine,
 Vouchsafe this picture of thy soul to see;
 'Tis so far good, as it resembles thee.
 The beauties to th' original I owe,
 Which when I miss, my own defects I show:
 Nor think the kindred Muses thy disgrace;
 A poet is not born in every race.
 Two of a house few ages can afford;
 One to perform, another to record.
 Praiseworthy actions are by thee embraced,
 And 'tis my praise to make thy praises last.
 For even when death dissolves our human frame,
 The soul returns to Heaven, from whence it came;
 Earth keeps the body, verse preserves the fame.

1700

From AN ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY [Shakespeare and Ben Jonson Compared]

To begin, then, with Shakespeare: he was the man who of all modern,
 and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive
 soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew
 them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you
 more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted
 learning give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned;
 he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards,
 and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I

grandsire Sir Erasmus Dryden opposed illegal
 loans to Charles I, and was imprisoned

should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He
 is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches,
 his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great when some
 great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit
 subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest
 of poets,

quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.[†]
 [as do cypresses among the bending osiers]

The consideration of this made Mr Hales[†] of Eton say that there was
 no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much
 better treated of in Shakespeare; and however others are now generally
 preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contem-
 poraries with him Fletcher[†] and Jonson, never equalled them to him in
 their esteem. And in the last King's court, when Ben's reputation was
 at highest, Sir John Suckling,[†] and with him the greater part of the
 courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him. . . .

As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon
 him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I
 think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever
 had. He was a most severe judge of himself as well as others. One
 cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his
 works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and language, and humour
 also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was
 wanting to the drama till he came. He managed his strength to more
 advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making
 love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his
 genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when
 he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height.
 Humour was his proper sphere, and in that he delighted most to
 represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the Ancients,
 both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is
 scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times
 whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*.[†] But he has done
 his robberies so openly that one may see he fears not to be taxed by
 any law. He invades authors like a monarch, and what would be theft
 in other poets is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he
 so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that
 if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen

clenches puns, mere word play
quantum . . . cupressi (Virgil, *Eclogues*, I)
Hales John Hales (1584–1656) of Eton
 College
Fletcher John Fletcher (1579–1625), dramatist

Suckling Sir John Suckling (1609–41),
 courtier-dramatist under Charles I
Sejanus and *Catiline* Roman tragedies (1603,
 1611) by Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously in his serious plays; perhaps, too, he did a little too much romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them: wherein, though he learnedly followed the idiom of their language, he did not enough comply with ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him, as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*,[†] we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage as any wherewith the French can furnish us. . . .

1668, 1684

From GROUNDS OF CRITICISM IN TRAGEDY

[*Shakespeare's language*]

If Shakespeare be allowed, as I think he must, to have made his characters distinct, it will easily be inferred that he understood the nature of the passions: because it has been proved already that confused passions make undistinguishable characters: yet I cannot deny that he has his failings; but they are not so much in the passions themselves as in his manner of expression: he often obscures his meaning by his words, and sometimes makes it unintelligible. I will not say of so great a poet that he distinguished not the blown puffy style from true sublimity; but I may venture to maintain that the fury of his fancy often transported him beyond the bounds of judgment, either in coining of new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use into the violence of a catachresis.[†] 'Tis not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passions, for Longinus[†] thinks 'em necessary to raise it; but to use 'em at every word, to say nothing without a metaphor, a simile, an image, or description, is I doubt to smell a little too strongly of the buskin.[†] . . . [quotes from *Hamlet* and *Richard II*]

Discoveries or *Timber*, Jonson's notebooks (pub. 1640)
catachresis misapplication of a word
Longinus critic who wrote on the sublime (first century AD)
buskin literally, boot worn in classical tragedy

If Shakespeare were stripped of all the bombast[†] in his passions, and dressed in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining; if his embroideries were burnt down, there would still be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot: but I fear (at least let me fear it for myself) that we who ape his sounding words have nothing of his thought, but are all outside; there is not so much as a dwarf within our giant's clothes. Therefore, let not Shakespeare suffer for our sakes; 'tis our fault, who succeed him in an age which is more refined, if we imitate him so ill that we copy his failings only, and make a virtue of that in our writings which in his was an imperfection. . . .

1679

From the PREFACE TO OVID'S EPISTLES

[*Translation*]

All translation, I suppose, may be reduced to these three heads. First, that of metaphor, or turning an author word by word, and line by line, from one language into another. Thus, or near this manner, was Horace[†] his *Art of Poetry* translated by Ben Jonson. The second way is that of paraphrase, or translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense, and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered. Such is Mr Waller's[†] translation of Virgil's Fourth Aeneid. The third way is that of imitation, where the translator (if now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division[†] on the ground-work, as he pleases. Such is Mr Cowley's[†] practice in turning two Odes of Pindar, and one of Horace, into English. . . .

1680

bombast inflated language
Horace Latin poet and critic (65–8 ac)
Waller Edmund Waller (1608–87), poetic father of 'Augustanism'
run division (musical) make variation on theme
Cowley Abraham Cowley (1618–67) imitated Greek odes of Pindar (522–443 ac)

From DISCOURSE CONCERNING SATIRE

The nicest and most delicate touches of satire consist in fine
 raillery. . . . 'Tis not reading, 'tis not imitation of an author, which can
 produce this fineness: it must be inborn; it must proceed from a genius,
 and particular way of thinking, which is not to be taught; and therefore
 not to be imitated by him who has it not from nature. How easy it is
 to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man
 appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those
 opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the names, and to do the
 thing yet more severely, is to draw a full face, and to make the nose
 and cheeks stand out, and yet not to employ any depth of shadowing.
 This is the mystery of that noble trade, which yet no master can teach
 to his apprentice: he may give the rules, but the scholar is never the
 nearer in his practice. Neither is it true that this fineness of raillery is
 offensive. A witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a
 fool feels it not. The occasion of an offence may possibly be given, but
 he cannot take it. If it be granted that in effect this way does more
 mischief; that a man is secretly wounded, and though he be not sensible
 himself, yet the malicious world will find it for him: yet there is still a
 vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the
 fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves
 it standing in its place. A man may be capable, as Jack Ketch's[†] wife
 said of his servant, of a plain piece of work, a bare hanging; but to
 make a malefactor die sweetly was only belonging to her husband. I
 wish I could apply it to myself, if the reader would be kind enough to
 think it belongs to me. The character of Zimri in my *Absalom* is, in my
 opinion, worth the whole poem: 'tis not bloody, but 'tis ridiculous
 enough. And he for whom it was intended was too witty to resent it as
 an injury. If I had railed, I might have suffered for it justly: but I
 managed my own work more happily, perhaps more dexterously. I
 avoided the mention of great crimes, and applied myself to the
 representing of blindsides,[†] and little extravagancies; to which, the
 wittier a man is, he is generally the more obnoxious[†]. It succeeded as I
 wished; the jest went round, and he was laughed at in his turn who
 began the frolic. . . .

1693

Jack Ketch public executioner (d.1686)
 blindsides unseen foibles

obnoxious liable

From PREFACE TO FABLES ANCIENT AND MODERN

[Chaucer]

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him
 in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the
 Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all
 sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects. As he knew
 what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a continence which is
 practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the Ancients, excepting
 Virgil and Horace. . . .

Chaucer followed nature everywhere, but was never so bold to go
 beyond her; and there is a great difference of being *poeta* and *nimis*
poeta,[†] if we may believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest
 behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not
 harmonious to us; but 'tis like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus[†]
 commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata* [suited to the
 ears of that time]. They who lived with him, and some time after him,
 thought it musical; and it continues so, even in our judgment, if
 compared with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower,[†] his contemporaries:
 there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and
 pleasing, though not perfect. 'Tis true, I cannot go so far as he who
 published the last edition of him; for he would make us believe the
 fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse
 where we find but nine. But this opinion is not worth confuting; 'tis so
 gross and obvious an error that common sense (which is a rule in
 everything but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader
 that equality of numbers, in every verse which we call *heroic*, was either
 not known or not always practised, in Chaucer's age. It were an easy
 matter to produce some thousands of his verses which are lame[†] for
 want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no
 pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say that he lived in
 the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at
 the first. We must be children before we grow men. . . .

He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature,
 because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the
 compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as

nimis poeta too much a poet (actually from
 Latin satirist Martial, 40–104)
Tacitus Roman historian (55–c. 115)
Lydgate . . . Gower John Lydgate (1370–
 1449); John Gower (1330–1408), poets

lame the true pronunciation of Chaucer's
 verse had been forgotten

we now call them) of the whole English nation in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta[†] could not have described their natures better than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) *lewd*, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing Lady Prioress and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed Wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is such a variety of game springing up before me that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great-grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of Monks, and Friars, and Canons, and Lady Abbesses, and Nuns: for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though everything is altered. . . .

1700

Baptista Porta Giambattista della Porta
(1535–1615), Italian author on face and
character

Samuel Pepys

1633–1703

Pepys was educated at St Paul's School, and at Cambridge. He gradually rose in his career as a civil servant, which culminated in two periods as Secretary to the Admiralty, in which he worked hard to improve the navy. In 1660–9, he kept his famous shorthand *Diary* (pub. 1825), where observation of the Court and public life is combined with his personal interests in music, drama, science and women. The extracts are from the period of the Great Fire of London, which destroyed 13,000 houses and many public buildings, leaving 100,000 people homeless. Note the use of the river for everyday transport.

From DIARY

[The Great Fire of London]

September 1666

2d. *Lords day*. Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast today, Jane called us up, about 3 in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose, and slipped on my nightgown and went to her window, and thought it to be on the back side of Mark Lane at the furthest; but being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off, and so went to bed again and to sleep. About 7 rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window and saw the fire not so much as it was, and further off. So to my closet to set things to rights after yesterday's cleaning. By 10 and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down tonight by the fire we saw, and that it was now burning down all Fish Street by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge[†] all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge – which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and

bridge
shops
old London Bridge carried houses and

our Sarah on the bridge. So down, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning to the King's baker's house in Pudding Lane, and that it hath burned down St Magnus Church and most part of Fish Street already. So I down to the water-side and there got a boat and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan, already burned that way and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steelyard while I was there. Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters¹ that lay off. Poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats or clambering from one pair of stair by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons I perceive were loath to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconies till they were some of them burned, their wings, and fell down.

Having stayed, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody to my sight endeavouring to quench it, but to remove their goods and leave all to the fire, and having seen it get as far as the Steelyard, and the wind mighty high and driving it into the City, and everything, after so long a drought, proving combustible, even the very stones of churches, and among other things, the poor steeple by which pretty Mrs Horsley lives, and whereof my old school-fellow Elborough is parson, taken fire in the very top and there burned till it fell down – I to Whitehall with a gentleman with me who desired to go off from the Tower to see the fire in my boat – to Whitehall, and there up to the King's closet in the chapel, where people came about me and I did give them an account dismayed them all; and word was carried in to the King, so I was called for and did tell the King and Duke of York what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down, nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor from him and command him to spare no houses but to pull down before the fire every way. The Duke of York bid me tell him that if he would have any more soldiers, he shall; and so did my Lord Arlington afterward, as a great secret. Here meeting with Captain Cocke, I in his coach, which he lent me, and Creed with me, to Paul's;² and there walked along Watling Street as well as I could, every creature coming away laden with goods to save – and here and there sick people carried away in beds. Extraordinary good goods carried in carts and on backs. At last met my Lord Mayor in Canning Street, like a man spent, with a handkercher about his neck. To the King's message, he cried like a fainting woman, 'Lord, what can I do? I am spent. People will not obey me. I have been

lighters goods-barges

Paul's old St Paul's Cathedral

pulling down houses. But the fire overtakes us faster then we can do it.' That he needed no more soldiers; and that for himself, he must go and refresh himself, having been up all night. So he left me, and I him, and walked home – seeing people all almost distracted and no manner of means used to quench the fire. The houses too, so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter for burning, as pitch and tar, in Thames Street – and warehouses of oil and wines and brandy and other things. Here I saw Mr Isaac Houlton, that handsome man – prettily dressed and dirty at his door at Dowgate, receiving some of his brothers' things whose houses were on fire; and as he says, have been removed twice already, and he doubts (as it soon proved) that they must be in a little time removed from his house also – which was a sad consideration. And to see the churches all filling with goods, by people who themselves should have been quietly there at this time. . . .

As soon as dined, I and Moone away and walked through the City, the streets full of nothing but people and horses and carts laden with goods, ready to run over one another, and removing goods from one burned house to another – they now removing out of Canning Street (which received goods in the morning) into Lombard Street and further; and among others, I now saw my little goldsmith Stokes receiving some friend's goods, whose house itself was burned the day after. We parted at Paul's, he home and I to Paul's Wharf, where I had appointed a boat to attend me; and took in Mr Carcasse and his brother, whom I met in the street, and carried them below and above bridge, to and again, to see the fire, which was now got further, both below and above, and no likelihood of stopping it. Met with the King and Duke of York in their barge, and with them to Queenhithe and there called Sir Rd. Browne to them. Their order was only to pull down houses apace, and so below bridge at the water-side; but little was or could be done, the fire coming upon them so fast. Good hopes there was of stopping it at the Three Cranes above, and at Botolphs Wharf below bridge, if care be used; but the wind carries it into the City, so as we know not by the water-side what it doth there. River full of lighters and boats taking in goods, and good goods swimming in the water; and only, I observed that hardly one lighter or boat in three that had the goods of a house in, but there was a pair of virginals³ in it. Having seen as much as I could now, I away to Whitehall by appointment, and there walked to St James's Park, and there met my wife and Creed and Wood and his wife and walked to my boat, and there upon the water again, and to the fire as up and down, it still increasing and the wind great. So near the fire as we could for smoke; and all over the Thames, with one's face in the

virginals keyboard musical instrument in a case

105 wind you were almost burned with a shower of firedrops – this is very true – so as houses were burned by these drops and flakes of fire, three or four, nay five or six houses, one from another. When we could endure no more upon the water, we to a little alehouse on the Bankside over against the Three Cranes, and there stayed till it was dark almost and saw the fire grow; and as it grew darker, appeared more and more and in corners and upon steeples and between churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the City, in a most horrid malicious bloody flame, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire. Barbary and her husband away before us. We stayed till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side the bridge, and in a bow up the hill, for an arch of above a mile long. It made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire and flaming at once, and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruin. So home with a sad heart, and there find everybody discoursing and lamenting the fire; and poor Tom Hater came with some few of his goods saved out of his house, which is burned upon Fish Street Hill. I invited him to lie at my house, and did receive his goods; but was deceived in his lying there, the noise coming every moment of the growth of the fire, so as we were forced to begin to pack up our own goods and prepare for their removal. And did by moonshine (it being brave, dry, and moonshine and warm weather) carry much of my goods into the garden, and Mr Hater and I did remove my money and iron chests into my cellar – as thinking that the safest place. And got my bags of gold into my office ready to carry away, and my chief papers of accounts also there, and my tallies¹ into a box by themselves. So great was our fear, as Sir W. Batten had carts come out of the country to fetch away his goods this night. We did put Mr Hater, poor man, to bed a little; but he got very little rest, so much noise being in my house, taking down of goods. . . .

130 5th. Home, and whereas I expected to have seen our house on fire, it being now about 7 a-clock, it was not. But to the fire, and there find greater hopes than I expected; for my confidence in finding our office¹ on fire was such, that I durst not ask anybody how it was with us, till I came and saw it not burned. But going to the fire, I find, by the blowing up of houses and the great help given by the workmen out of the King's yards, sent up by Sir W. Penn, there is a good stop given to it, as well at Mark Lane end as ours – it having only burned the dial of Barking Church, and part of the porch, and was there quenched. I up to the top of Barking steeple, and there saw the saddest sight of desolation that I

tallies notched accounting sticks
office the fire stopped just short of the Navy
Office, north of the Tower

ever saw. Everywhere great fires. Oil-cellars and brimstone and other things burning. I became afeared to stay there long; and therefore down again as fast as I could, the fire being spread as far as I could see it, and to Sir W. Penn's and there eat a piece of cold meat, having eaten nothing since Sunday but the remains of Sunday's dinner.

160 Here I met with Mr Young and Whistler; and having removed all my things, and received good hopes that the fire at our end is stopped, they and I walked into the town and find Fenchurch Street, Gracious Street, and Lombard Street all in dust. The Exchange¹ a sad sight, nothing standing there of all the statues or pillars but Sir Tho. Gresham's picture¹ in the corner. Walked into Moorfields (our feet ready to burn, walking through the town among the hot coals) and find that full of people, and poor wretches carrying their goods there, and everybody keeping his goods together by themselves (and a great blessing it is to them that it is fair weather for them to keep abroad night and day); drank there, and paid twopence for a plain penny loaf.

165 Thence homeward, having passed through Cheapside and Newgate market, all burned – and seen Anthony Joyce's house in fire. And took up (which I keep by me) a piece of glass of Mercer's chapel in the street, where much more was, so melted and buckled with the heat of the fire, like parchment. I also did see a poor cat taken out of a hole in the chimney joining to the wall of the Exchange, with the hair all burned off the body and yet alive. So home at night, and find there good hopes of saving our office – but great endeavours of watching all night and having men ready; and so we lodged them in the office, and had drink and bread and cheese for them. And I lay down and slept a good night about midnight – though when I rose, I hear that there had been a great alarm of French and Dutch being risen – which proved nothing. But it is a strange thing to see how long this time did look since Sunday, having been always full of variety of actions, and little sleep, that it looked like a week or more. And I had forgot almost the day of the week.

1666

1825

Exchange the Royal Exchange, founded by
Gresham (1519–79) picture statue

Thomas Sprat

1635–1713

Sprat became Bishop of Rochester, and published verse and a life of the poet Cowley; but he is best remembered for his *History of the Royal Society* (1667), the embodiment of modern experimental science to which such writers as Aubrey, Cowley and Dryden also belonged. The first extract describes the Society's stylistic reforms; the second, the imaginative excitement of discovery.

From THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY

[*The Prose Style Sought by the Royal Society*]

They have therefore been most rigorous in putting in execution the only remedy that can be found for this extravagance, i.e. this vicious abundance of phrase, the stricken metaphors, this volubility of tongue, which makes so great a noise in the world; and that has been, a constant resolution, to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style; to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men delivered so many things, almost in an equal number of words. They have exacted from all their members a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can; and preferring the language of artificers, countrymen, and merchants, before that of wits or scholars. . . .

1667

[*Prospects of Scientific Discovery*]

This is the most natural method of the foundation and progress of manual arts. And they may still be advanced to a higher perfection, than they have yet obtained, either by the discovery of new matter, to employ men's hands, or by a new transplantation of the same matter, or by handling the old subjects of manufactures after a new way, in the same places.

And first, we have reason to expect that there may still arise new matter to be managed by human art and diligence; and that from the parts of the earth that are yet unknown, or from the new discovered America, or from our own seas and land, that have been long searched into, and inhabited.

If ever any more countries, which are now hidden from us, shall be revealed, it is not to be questioned, but there will be also opened to our observation, very many kinds of living creatures, of minerals, of plants, nay, of handicrafts, with which we have been hitherto unacquainted. This may well be expected, if we remember, that there was never yet any land discovered, which has not given us divers new sorts of animals, and fruits of different features and shapes, and virtues[†] from our own, or has not supplied us with some new artificial engine, and contrivance.

And that our discoveries may still be enlarged to farther countries, it is a good proof, that so many spacious shores and mountains, and promontories, appear to our southern and northern sailors; of which we have yet no account, but only such as could be taken by a remote prospect at sea. From whence, and from the figure of the earth, it may be concluded, that almost as much space of ground remains still in the dark, as was fully known in the times of the Assyrian or Persian monarchy. So that without assuming the vain prophetic spirit, which I lately condemned, we may foretell, that the discovery of another new world is still behind.

To accomplish this, there is only wanting the invention of longitude,[†] which cannot now be far off, seeing it is generally allowed to be feasible, seeing so many rewards are ready to be heaped on the inventors; and (I will also add) seeing the Royal Society has taken it into its peculiar care. This, if it shall be once accomplished, will make well-nigh as much alteration in the world, as the invention of the needle[†] did before: and then our posterity may outgo us, as much as we can travel farther than the ancients; whose demigods and heroes did esteem it one of their chief exploits, to make a journey as far as the Pillars of Hercules.[†] Whoever shall think this to be a desperate business, they can only use the same arguments, wherewith Columbus[†] was at first made ridiculous, if he had been discouraged by the railery of his adversaries, by the judgment of most astronomers of his time, and even by the entreaties of his own companions; but three days before he had a sight of land, we had lost the knowledge of half the world at once.

And as for the new discovered America, 'tis true, that has not been

virtues	qualities	Pillars of Hercules	limits of classical world, at
longitude	map position east or west of a set	Straits of Gibraltar	
line; the solution came in the later eighteenth century		Columbus	'discovered' America in 1492
needle	magnetic compass		

altogether useless to the mechanic arts: but still we may guess, that much more of its bounty is to come, if we consider, that it has not yet been shown above two hundred years; which is scarce enough time to travel it over, describe, and measure it, much less to pierce into all its secrets. Beside this, a good part of this space was spent in the conquest and settling the Spanish government, which is a season improper for philosophical¹ discoveries. To this may be added, that the chief design of the Spaniards thither, has been the transportation of bullion; which being so profitable, they may well be thought to have overseen many other of its native riches. But above all, let us reflect on the temper of the Spaniards themselves: they suffer no strangers to arrive there; they permit not the natives to know more than becomes their slaves. And how unfit the Spanish humour is to improve manufactures, in a country so distant as the West Indies, we may learn by their practice in Spain itself, where they commonly disdain to exercise any manual crafts, and permit the profit of them to be carried away by strangers.

From all this we may make this conclusion, that if ever that vast tract of ground shall come to be more familiar to Europe, either by a free trade, or by conquest, or by any other revolution in its civil affairs, America will appear quite a new thing to us; and may furnish us with an abundance of rarities, both natural and artificial; of which we have been almost as much deprived by its present masters, as if it had still remained a part of the unknown world.

But lastly, to come nearer home, we have no ground to despair, but very much more matter, which has been yet unhandled, may still be brought to light, even in the most civil and most peopled countries, whose lands have been thoroughly measured by the hands of the most exact surveyors; whose underground riches have been accurately probed into; whose cities, islands, rivers, and provinces, have been described by the labours of geographers. It is not to be doubted, but still there may be an infinite number of creatures over our heads, round about us, and under our feet, in the large space of the air, in the caverns of the earth, in the bowels of mountains, in the bottom of seas, and in the shades of forests, which have hitherto escaped all mortal senses. In this the microscope alone is enough to silence all opposers. Before that was invented, the chief help that was given to the eyes by glasses, was only to strengthen the dim sight of old age; but now by the means of that excellent instrument, we have a far greater number of different kinds of things revealed to us, than were contained in the visible universe before; and even this is not yet brought to perfection: the chief labours that are published in this way, have been the observations of some Fellows of the Royal Society, nor have they as yet applied it to all

subjects, nor tried it in all materials and figures of glass. To the eyes therefore there may still be given a vast addition of objects: and proportionably to all the other senses. . . .

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester

1647–80

Rochester's short life had many sides. After Oxford and a continental tour, he abducted an heiress and fought the Dutch. He was famous at the court of Charles II as both rake and writer of lyric and satiric poetry: the frankness of his language and honesty of attitude led to a reputation as pornographer. He died a quiet religious death. Rochester's satires and classical imitations are early examples of the pointed, lucid 'Augustan' manner. His sceptical scrutiny of human behaviour has much in common with contemporary philosophy, or the cynicism of the comic drama patronised by the court.

SATIRE

Were I (who to my cost already am
One of those strange prodigious* creatures, man)
A spirit free to choose, for my own share,
What case* of flesh and blood I pleased to wear,
I'd be a dog, a monkey, or a bear,
Or anything but that vain animal
Who is so proud of being rational.
The senses are too gross, and he'll contrive
A sixth to contradict the other five;
And before certain instinct will prefer
Reason, which fifty times for one does err;
Reason, an *ignis fatuus*[†] in the mind,
Which, leaving light of nature, sense, behind,
Pathless and dangerous wandering ways it takes
Through error's fenny bogs and thorny brakes;
Whilst the misguided follower climbs with pain
Mountains of whimsies, heaped in his own brain;
Stumbling from thought to thought falls headlong down
Into doubt's boundless sea, where, like to drown,

ignis fatuus deluding light

Books bear him up a while, and make him try
To swim with bladders* of philosophy;
In hopes still to o'ertake th' escaping light,
The vapour dances in his dazzling sight
Till spent, it leaves him to eternal night.
Then old age and experience, hand in hand,
Lead him to death and make him understand,
After a search so painful and so long,
That all his life he has been in the wrong;
Huddled in dirt the reasoning engine lies,
Who was so proud, so witty, and so wise.
Pride drew him in, as cheats their bubbles[†] catch,
And makes him venture to be made a wretch.
His wisdom did his happiness destroy,
Aiming to know that world he should enjoy;
And wit was his vain, frivolous pretence
Of pleasing others at his own expense;
For wits are treated just like common whores,
First they're enjoyed, and then kicked out of doors.
The pleasure past, a threatening doubt remains
That frights th' enjoyer with succeeding pains.[†]
Women and men of wit are dangerous tools,
And ever fatal to admiring fools;
Pleasure allures, and when the fops escape,
'Tis not that they're beloved, but fortunate,
And therefore what they fear, at heart they hate.
But now methinks some formal band[†] and beard
Takes me to task. Come on, sir; I'm prepared.
'Then, by your favour, anything that's writ
Against this gibing, jingling knack called wit
Likes[†] me abundantly, but[†] you take care
Upon this point, not to be too severe.
Perhaps my muse were fitter for this part,
For I profess I can be very smart
On wit, which I abhor with all my heart:
I long to lash it in some sharp essay,
But your grand indiscretion bids me stay
And turns my tide of ink another way.
What rage ferments in your degenerate mind
To make you rail at reason and mankind?

hubbles foolish victims
hums from disease

band clergymen's garment
likes . . . but pleases; *but:* provided that

air-bags

- 60 Blest, glorious man! to whom alone kind heaven
 An everlasting soul has freely given;
 Whom his great Maker took such care to make
 That from himself he did the image take;
 And this fair frame in shining reason dressed
- 65 To dignify his nature above beast;
 Reason, by whose aspiring influence
 We take a flight beyond material sense,
 Dive into mysteries, then soaring pierce
 The flaming limits of the universe,
 Search heaven and hell, find out what's acted there,
 And give the world true grounds of hope and fear.[†]
 Hold, mighty man, I cry, all this we know
 From the pathetic pen of Ingelo,
 From Patrick's *Pilgrim*, Stillingfleet's[†] replies,
- 75 And 'tis this very reason I despise:
 This supernatural gift that makes a mite[†]
 Think he's the image of the infinite,
 Comparing his short life, void of all rest,
 To the eternal and the ever blest;
 This busy, puzzling stirrer-up of doubt
 That frames deep mysteries, then finds 'em out;
 Filling with frantic crowds of thinking fools
 Those reverend bedlams, colleges and schools;
 Borne on whose wings, each heavy sot can pierce
 The limits of the boundless universe;
 So charming[†] ointments make an old witch fly
 And bear a crippled carcass through the sky.
 'Tis this exalted power, whose business lies
 In nonsense and impossibilities,
 This made a whimsical philosopher[†]
 Before the spacious world, his tub prefer,
 And we have modern cloistered coxcombs who
 Retire to think, cause they have nought to do.
 But thoughts are given for action's government;
 Where action ceases, thought's impertinent.*
 Our sphere of action is life's happiness,
 And he who thinks beyond thinks like an ass.

irrelevant

Ingelo, . . . *Stillingfleet* Nathaniel Ingelo
 (c. 1621–83); Bishop Patrick (*Parable of the
 Pilgrim*, 1664); Edward Stillingfleet (1635–
 99), critic of this poem: clerical writers
 mite parasitic insect

charming with magic spells
 philosopher Diogenes, fourth century BC
 Greek, went from dissolute life to the
 asceticism of a tub

- Thus, whilst against false reasoning I inveigh,
 I own[†] right reason, which I would obey:
 That reason which distinguishes by sense,
 And gives us rules of good and ill from thence;
 That bounds desires with a reforming will
 To keep 'em more in vigour, not to kill.
 Your reason hinders, mine helps to enjoy,
 Renewing appetites yours would destroy.
 My reason is my friend, yours is a cheat;
 Hunger calls out, my reason bids me eat;
 Perversely yours your appetite does mock:
 This asks for food, that answers, 'What's o'clock?'
 This plain distinction, sir, your doubt secures:[†]
 'Tis not true reason I despise, but yours.
 Thus I think reason righted; but for man,
 I'll ne'er recant, defend him if you can.
 For all his pride and his philosophy,
 'Tis evident beasts are, in their degree,[†]
 As wise at least and better far than he.
 Those creatures are the wisest who attain
 By surest means the ends at which they aim.
 If therefore Jowler[†] finds and kills his hares
 Better than Meres[†] supplies committee chairs,
 Though one's a statesman, th' other but a hound,
 Jowler, in justice, would be wiser found.
 You see how far man's wisdom here extends;
 Look next if human nature makes amends:
 Whose principles most generous are and just,
 And to whose morals you would sooner trust.
 Be judge yourself, I'll bring it to the test:
 Which is the basest creature, man or beast?
 Birds feed on birds, beasts on each other prey,
 But savage man alone does man betray.
 Pressed by necessity, they kill for food;
 Man undoes man to do himself no good.
 With teeth and claws by nature armed, they hunt
 Nature's allowance, to supply their want.
 But man, with smiles, embraces, friendships, praise,
 Inhumanly his fellow's life betrays;

own admit (cf. l.189)
 secures turns to certainty
 degree relative position

Jowler heavy-jowled dog
 Meres Sir Thomas Meres (1635–1715),
 parliamentary chairman

- With voluntary pains works his distress,
Not through necessity, but wantonness.
For hunger or for love they fight or tear,
Whilst wretched man is still in arms for fear.
For fear he arms, and is of arms afraid,
By fear to fear successively betrayed;
Base fear, the source whence his best passions came:
His boasted honour, and his dear-bought fame;
That lust of power, to which he's such a slave,
And for the which alone he dares be brave;
To which his various projects are designed,
Which makes him generous, affable, and kind;
For which he takes such pains to be thought wise,
And screws his actions in a forced disguise;
Leading a tedious life in misery
Under laborious, mean hypocrisy.
Look to the bottom of his vast design,
Wherein man's wisdom, power, and glory join;
The good he acts, the ill he does endure,
'Tis all from fear, to make himself secure.
Merely for safety, after fame we thirst,
For all men would be cowards if they durst.
And honesty's against all common sense:
Men must be knaves, 'tis in their own defence.
Mankind's dishonest; if you think it fair
Amongst known cheats to play upon the square,
You'll be undone —
Nor can weak truth your reputation save;
The knaves will all agree to call you knave.
Wronged shall he live, insulted o'er, oppressed,
Who dares be less a villain than the rest.
Thus, sir, you see what human nature craves;
Most men are cowards, all men should be knaves:
The difference lies (as far I can see)
Not in the thing itself but the degree;
And all the subject matter of debate
Is only who's a knave of the first rate?
All this with indignation have I hurled
At the pretending part of the proud world,
Who, swollen with selfish vanity, devise
False freedoms, holy cheats, and formal lies
Over their fellow slaves to tyrannize.
But if in court so just a man there be
(In court a just man, yet unknown to me)

- Who does his needful flattery direct
Not to oppress and ruin, but protect;
Since flattery, which way soever laid,
Is still a tax on that unhappy trade;
If so upright a statesman you can find,
Whose passions bend to his unbiased mind,
Who does his arts and policies apply
To raise his country, not his family,
Nor, while his pride owned* avarice withstands,
Receives close* bribes through friends' corrupted hands.
Is there a churchman who on God relies;
Whose life his faith and doctrine justifies?
Not one blown up with vain prelatic[†] pride,
Who for reproof of sins does man deride;
Whose envious heart makes preaching a pretence,
With his obstreperous, saucy eloquence,
To chide at kings and rail at men of sense;
Who from his pulpit vents more peevish lies,
More bitter railings, scandals, calumnies,
Than at a gossiping are thrown about,
When the good wives get drunk, and then fall out;
None of that sensual tribe whose talents lie
In avarice, pride, sloth, and gluttony;
Who hunt good livings[†] but abhor good lives;
Whose lust exalted to that height arrives
They act adultery with their own wives,
And ere a score of years completed be,
Can from the lofty pulpit proudly see
Half a large parish their own progeny.
Nor doting bishop who would be adored
For domineering at the council board;
A greater fop in business at fourscore,
Fonder of serious toys, affected more,
Than the gay, glittering fool at twenty proves,
With all his noise, his tawdry clothes, and loves.
But a meek, humble man of honest sense,
Who, preaching peace, does practice continence;
Whose pious life's a proof he does believe
Mysterious truths, which no man can conceive.
If upon earth there dwell such God-like men,
I'll here recant my paradox to them,
Adore those shrines of virtue, homage pay,

prelatic of major churchman

livings paid church offices

open
secret

And, with the rabble world, their laws obey.

If such there are, yet grant me this at least:

Man differs more from man, than man from beast.

225

1674

1679

William Dampier

1652–1715

Dampier wrote several accounts of his voyages as a buccaneering explorer, which took him to South America, the East Indies and Australia: *New Voyage Round the World* (1697); *Voyage to New Holland* (1703–9). He is a link between the adventurous narratives of the seventeenth century and the more scientifically documented explorations of the eighteenth. He features in the history of Alexander Selkirk, whose being marooned on Juan Fernandez gave Defoe the kernel of *Robinson Crusoe* (see p. 85); Swift's Gulliver refers to his 'cousin Dampier'.

From A NEW VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD

[Australian Natives]

At last we went over to the islands, and there we found a great many of the natives: I do believe there were forty on one island, men, women, and children. The men, at our first coming ashore, threatened us with their lances and swords; but they were frightened by firing one gun, which we fired purposely to scare them. The island was so small that they could not hide themselves; but they were much disordered at our landing, especially the women and children, for we went directly to their camp. The lustiest of the women snatching up their infants ran away howling, and the little children ran after squeaking and bawling, but the men stood still. One of the women, and such people as could not go from us, lay still by a fire; making a doleful noise as if we had been coming to devour them; but when they saw that we did not intend to harm them they were pretty quiet, and the rest that fled from us at our first coming returned again. This, their place of dwelling, was only a fire, with a few boughs before it, set up on that side the wind was of.

After we had been here a little while the men began to be familiar, and we clothed some of them, designing to have some service of them for it; for we found some wells of water here, and intended to carry two or three barrels of it aboard. But being somewhat troublesome to carry to the canoes, we thought to have made these men to have carried

it for us, and therefore we gave them some clothes; to one an old pair of breeches, to another a ragged shirt, to a third a jacket that was scarce worth owning, which yet would have been very acceptable at some places where we had been, and so we thought they might have been with these people. We put them on them, thinking that this finery would have brought them to work heartily for us; and our water being filled in small long barrels, about six gallons in each, which were made purposely to carry water in, we brought these our new servants to the wells, and put a barrel on each of their shoulders for them to carry in the canoe. But all the signs we could make were to no purpose, for they stood like statues, without motion, but grinned like so many monkeys, staring one upon another; for these poor creatures seem not accustomed to carry burdens, and I believe that one of our ship-boys of ten years old would carry as much as one of them. So we were forced to carry our water ourselves, and they very fairly put the clothes off again and laid them down, as if clothes were only to work in. I did not perceive that they had any great liking to them at first, neither did they seem to admire anything that we had.

At another time, our canoe being among these islands seeking for game, we espied a drove of these men swimming from an island to another; for they have no boats, canoes, or bark-logs. They took up four of them and brought them aboard; two of them were middle aged, the other two were young men about eighteen or twenty years old. To these we gave boiled rice, and with it turtle and manatee¹ boiled. They did greedily devour what we gave them, but took no notice of the ship or any thing in it, and when they were set on land again they ran away as fast as they could. At our first coming, before we were acquainted with them or they with us, a company of them who lived on the main came just against our ship, and standing on a pretty high bank, threatened us with their swords and lances by shaking them at us; at last the captain ordered the drum to be beaten, which was done of a sudden with much vigour, purposely to scare the poor creatures. They hearing the noise ran away as fast as they could drive, and when they ran away in haste they would cry, *Gurry Gurry*, speaking deep in the throat. Those inhabitants also that live on the main would always run away from us, yet we took several of them. For, as I have already observed, they had such bad eyes that they could not see us till we came close to them. We did always give them victuals and let them go again, but the islanders, after our first time of being among them, did not stir for us. . . .

manatee sea-cow

1697

Daniel Defoe

1660–1731

The son of a London butcher of dissenting views called Foe, Defoe travelled widely on the Continent before becoming a hosiery merchant. He supported the accession of William III in verse (*The True-Born Englishman*, 1701) but suffered in prison and the pillory for the misreading of his ironic *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702). After the failure of several business ventures, he travelled the country as a Tory secret agent (1703–14), and later put his observations to good use in his *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724–6). He wrote and edited many hundreds of books and pamphlets on social, religious and economic questions (*The Complete English Tradesman*, 1726); these show more learning and a wider range of styles than might be suspected by casual readers of the novels on which his fame depends: *Robinson Crusoe* (1719); *Moll Flanders* (1722); *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722); *Roxana* (1724). Often regarded as the first real novelist, he presents fictional material with the appearance of authenticity through his detailed, realistic style, which creates a solid world.

From ROBINSON CRUSOE[†]

[Shipwreck]

After we had rowed, or rather driven about a league[†] and a half, as we reckoned it, a raging wave, mountain-like, came rolling astern of us, and plainly bade us expect the *Coup de Grace*. In a word, it took us with such a fury, that it overset the boat at once; and separating us as well from the boat, as from one another, gave us not time hardly to say, O God! for we were all swallowed up in a moment.

Nothing can describe the confusion of thought which I felt when I sunk into the water; for though I swam very well, yet I could not deliver myself from the waves so as to draw breath, till that wave having

Robinson Crusoe Crusoe is shipwrecked on an island, where he remains twenty-eight years
league about three miles

10 driven me, or rather carried me a vast way on towards the shore, and
 having spent itself, went back, and left me upon the land almost dry,
 but half-dead with the water I took in. I had so much presence of mind
 as well as breath left, that seeing myself nearer the mainland than I
 15 expected, I got upon my feet, and endeavoured to make on towards
 the land as fast as I could, before another wave should return, and take
 me up again. But I soon found it was impossible to avoid it; for I saw
 the sea come after me as high as a great hill, and as furious as an enemy,
 which I had no means or strength to contend with; my business was to
 20 hold my breath, and raise myself upon the water, if I could; and so by
 swimming to preserve my breathing, and pilot myself towards the shore,
 if possible; my greatest concern now being, that the sea, as it would
 carry me a great way towards the shore when it came on, might not
 carry me back again with it when it gave back towards the sea.

The wave that came upon me again, buried me at once 20 or 30 foot
 deep in its own body; and I could feel myself carried with a mighty
 25 force and swiftness towards the shore a very great way; but I held my
 breath, and assisted myself to swim still forward with all my might. I
 was ready to burst with holding my breath, when as I felt myself rising
 up, so to my immediate relief, I found my head and hands shoot out
 30 above the surface of the water; and though it was not two seconds of
 time that I could keep myself so, yet it relieved me greatly, gave me
 breath and new courage. I was covered again with water a good while,
 but not so long but I held it out; and finding the water had spent itself,
 35 and began to return, I struck forward against the return of the waves,
 and felt ground again with my feet. I stood still a few moments to
 recover breath, and till the water went from me, and then took to my
 heels, and ran with what strength I had farther towards the shore. But
 neither would this deliver me from the fury of the sea, which came
 40 pouring in after me again, and twice more I was lifted up by the waves,
 and carried forwards as before, the shore being very flat.

The last time of these two had well near been fatal to me; for the sea
 having hurried me along as before, landed me, or rather dashed me
 against a piece of a rock, and that with such force, as it left me senseless,
 45 and indeed helpless, as to my own deliverance; for the blow taking my
 side and breast, beat the breath as it were quite out of my body; and
 had it returned again immediately, I must have been strangled in the
 water; but I recovered a little before the return of the waves, and seeing
 I should be covered again with the water, I resolved to hold fast by a
 50 piece of the rock, and so to hold my breath, if possible, till the wave
 went back; now as the waves were not so high as at first, being nearer
 land, I held my hold till the wave abated, and then fetched another run,
 which brought me so near the shore, that the next wave, though it went
 over me, yet did not so swallow me up as to carry me away, and the

next run I took, I got to the mainland, where, to my great comfort, I
 clambered up the cliffs of the shore, and sat me down upon the grass,
 free from danger, and quite out of the reach of the water.

I was now landed, and safe on shore, and began to look up and
 thank God that my life was saved in a case wherein there was some
 minutes before scarce any room to hope. I believe it is impossible to
 40 express to the life what the ecstasies and transports of the soul are,
 when it is so saved, as I may say, out of the very grave; and I do not
 wonder now at that custom, *viz.* that when a malefactor who has the
 halter about his neck, is tied up, and just going to be turned off,[†] and
 has a reprieve brought to him: I say, I do not wonder that they bring a
 45 surgeon with it, to let him blood that very moment they tell him of it,
 that the surprise may not drive the animal spirits from the heart, and
 overwhelm him:

For sudden joys, like griefs, confound at first.

I walked about on the shore, lifting up my hands, and my whole
 being, as I may say, wrapt up in the contemplation of my deliverance,
 70 making a thousand gestures and motions which I cannot describe,
 reflecting upon all my comrades that were drowned, and that there
 should not be one soul saved but myself; for, as for them, I never saw
 them afterwards, or any sign of them, except three of their hats, one
 cap, and two shoes that were not fellows.

I cast my eyes to the stranded vessel, when the breach and froth of
 the sea being so big, I could hardly see it, it lay so far off, and considered,
 Lord! how was it possible I could get on shore?

After I had solaced my mind with the comfortable part of my
 80 condition, I began to look round me to see what kind of place I was in,
 and what was next to be done, and I soon found my comforts abate,
 and that in a word I had a dreadful deliverance: For I was wet, had no
 clothes to shift[‡] me, nor any thing either to eat or drink to comfort me,
 neither did I see any prospect before me, but that of perishing with
 85 hunger, or being devoured by wild beasts; and that which was
 particularly afflicting to me, was, that I had no weapon either to hunt
 and kill any creature for my sustenance, or to defend myself against
 any other creature that might desire to kill me for theirs: in a word, I
 had nothing about me but a knife, a tobacco-pipe, and a little tobacco
 90 in a box; this was all my provision, and this threw me into terrible
 agonies of mind, that for a while I ran about like a madman; night
 coming upon me, I began with a heavy heart to consider what would
 be my lot if there were any ravenous beasts in that country, seeing at
 night they always come abroad for their prey.

turned off changed

shift change clothes

95 All the remedy that offered to my thoughts at that time, was, to get
up into a thick bushy tree like a fir, but thorny, which grew near the
and where I resolved to set all night, and consider the next day what
death I should die, for as yet I saw no prospect of life; I walked about
a furlong from the shore, to see if I could find any fresh water to drink
which I did, to my great joy; and having drunk and put a little tobacco
in my mouth to prevent hunger, I went to the tree, and getting up into
it, endeavoured to place myself so, as that if I should sleep I might not
fall; and having cut me a short stick, like a truncheon, for my defence,
I took up my lodging, and having been excessively fatigued, I fell fast
asleep, and slept as comfortably as, I believe, few could have done in
my condition, and found myself the most refreshed with it, that I think
I ever was on such an occasion.

When I waked it was broad day, the weather clear, and the storm
abated, so that the sea did not rage and swell as before: but that which
surprised me most, was, that the ship was lifted off in the night from
the sand where she lay, by the swelling of the tide, and was driven up
almost as far as the rock which I first mentioned, where I had been so
bruised by the dashing me against it; this being within about a mile
from the shore where I was, and the ship seeming to stand upright still,
I wished myself on board, that, at least, I might save some necessary
things for my use.

When I came down from my apartment in the tree, I looked about
me again, and the first thing I found was the boat, which lay as the
wind and the sea had tossed her up upon the land, about two miles on
my right hand. I walked as far as I could upon the shore to have got to
her, but found a neck or inlet of water between me and the boat, which
was about half a mile broad, so I came back for the present, being more
intent upon getting at the ship, where I hoped to find something for my
present subsistence.

125 A little after noon I found the sea very calm, and the tide ebbed so
far out, that I could come within a quarter of a mile of the ship; and
here I found a fresh renewing of my grief, for I saw evidently, that if
we had kept on board, we had been all safe, that is to say, we had all
got safe on shore, and I had not been so miserable as to be left entirely
destitute of all comfort and company, as I now was; this forced tears
from my eyes again, but as there was little relief in that, I resolved, if
possible, to get to the ship, so I pulled off my clothes, for the weather
was hot to extremity, and took the water, but when I came to the ship,
my difficulty was still greater to know how to get on board, for as she
lay aground, and high out of the water, there was nothing within my
reach to lay hold of; I swam round her twice, and the second time I
spied a small piece of a rope, which I wondered I did not see at first,
hang down by the fore-chains so low, as that with great difficulty I got

hold of it, and by the help of that rope, got up into the fore-castle of
the ship; here I found that the ship was bulged,[†] and had a great deal
of water in her hold, but that she lay so on the side of a bank of hard
sand, or rather earth, that her stern lay lifted up upon the bank and
her head low almost to the water; by this means all her quarter[†] was
free, and all that was in that part was dry; for you may be sure my
first work was to search and to see what was spoiled and what was
free; and first I found that all the ship's provisions were dry and
untouched by the water, and being very well disposed to eat, I went to
the bread-room and filled my pockets with biscuit, and ate it as I went
about other things, for I had no time to lose; I also found some rum in
the great cabin, of which I took a large dram, and which I had indeed
need enough of to spirit me for what was before me: Now I wanted
nothing but a boat to furnish myself with many things which I foresaw
would be very necessary to me.

It was in vain to sit still and wish for what was not to be had, and
this extremity roused my application; we had several spare yards, and
two or three large spars of wood, and a spare top-mast or two in the
ship; I resolved to fall to work with these, and I flung as many of them
overboard as I could manage for their weight, tying every one with a
rope that they might not drive away; when this was done I went down
the ship's side, and pulling them to me, I tied four of them fast together
at both ends as well as I could, in the form of a raft, and laying two or
three short pieces of plank upon them cross-ways, I found I could walk
upon it very well, but that it was not able to bear any great weight, the
pieces being too light; so I went to work, and with the carpenter's saw
I cut a spare top-mast into three lengths, and added them to my raft,
with a great deal of labour and pains, but hope of furnishing myself
with necessities encouraged me to go beyond what I should have been
able to have done upon another occasion. . . .

[Spiritual Awakening]

I thought, that I was sitting on the ground on the outside of my wall,
where I sat when the storm blew after the earthquake, and that I saw a
man descend from a great black cloud, in a bright flame of fire, and
light upon the ground: he was all over as bright as a flame, so that I
could but just bear to look towards him; his countenance was most
inexpressibly dreadful, impossible for words to describe; when he
stepped upon the ground with his feet, I thought the earth trembled,
just as it had done before in the earthquake, and all the air looked, to

bulged pierced at bottom

quarter after part

my apprehension, as if it had been filled with flashes of fire.

He was no sooner landed upon the earth, but he moved forward towards me, with a long spear or weapon in his hand, to kill me; and when he came to a rising ground, at some distance, he spoke to me, or I heard a voice so terrible, that it is impossible to express the terror of it; all that I can say I understood, was this, *Seeing all these things have not brought thee to repentance, now thou shalt die: at which words, I thought he lifted up the spear that was in his hand, to kill me.*

No one that shall ever read this account will expect that I should be able to describe the horrors of my soul at this terrible vision, I mean, that even while it was a dream, I even dreamed of those horrors; nor is it any more possible to describe the impression that remained upon my mind when I awaked and found it was but a dream.

I had alas! no divine knowledge; what I had received by the good instruction of my father was then worn out by an uninterrupted series, for 8 years, of seafaring wickedness, and a constant conversation with nothing but such as were like my self, wicked and profane to the last degree: I do not remember that I had in all that time one thought that so much as tended either to looking upwards toward God, or inwards towards a reflection upon my own ways: but a certain stupidity of soul, without desire of good, or conscience^t of evil, had entirely overwhelmed me, and I was all that the most hardened, unthinking, wicked creature among our common sailors, can be supposed to be, not having the least sense, either of the fear of God in danger, or of thankfulness to God in deliverances.

In the relating what is already past of my story, this will be the more easily believed, when I shall add that through all the variety of miseries that had to this day befallen me, I never had so much as one thought of it being the hand of God, or that it was a punishment for my sin; my rebellious behaviour against my father, or my present sins which were great; or so much as a punishment for the general course of my wicked life. When I was on the desperate expedition on the desert shores of Africa, I never had so much as one thought of what would become of me; or one wish to God to direct me whither I should go, or to keep me from the danger which apparently surrounded me, as well from voracious creatures as cruel savages: but I was merely^t thoughtless of a God, or a Providence; acted like a mere brute from the principles of nature, and by the dictates of common sense only, and indeed hardly that.

When I was delivered and taken up at sea by the Portugal Captain, well used, and dealt justly and honourably with, as well as charitably,

conscience awareness

merely entirely

I had not the least thankfulness in my thoughts: when again I was shipwrecked, ruined, and in danger of drowning on this island, I was as far from remorse, or looking on it as a judgment; I only said to myself often, that I was *an unfortunate dog*, and born to be always miserable.

It is true, when I got on shore first here, and found all my ship's crew drowned, and myself spared, I was surprised with a kind of ecstasy, and some transports of soul, which, had the grace of God assisted, might have come up to true thankfulness; but it ended where it began, in a mere common flight of joy, or as I may say, *being glad I was alive*, without the least reflection upon the distinguishing goodness of the hand which had preserved me, and had singled me out to be preserved, when all the rest were destroyed; or an enquiry why Providence had been thus merciful to me; even just the same common sort of joy which seamen generally have after they are got safe ashore from a shipwreck, which they drown all in the next bowl of punch, and forget almost as soon as it is over, and all the rest of my life was like it.

Even when I was afterwards, on due consideration, made sensible of my condition, how I was cast on this dreadful place, out of the reach of human kind, out of all hope of relief, of prospect of redemption, as soon as I saw but a prospect of living, and that I should not starve and perish for hunger, all the sense of my affliction wore off, and I began to be very easy, applied myself to the works proper for my preservation and supply, and was^t far enough from being afflicted at my condition, as a judgment from heaven, or as the hand of God against me; these were thoughts which very seldom entered into my head.

The growing up of the corn, as is hinted in my journal, had at first some little influence upon me, and began to affect me with seriousness, as long as I thought it had something miraculous in it; but as soon as ever that part of the thought was removed, all the impression which was raised from it, wore off also, as I have noted already.

Even the earthquake, though nothing could be more terrible in its nature, or more immediately directing to the invisible power which alone directs such things, yet no sooner was the first fright over, but the impression it had made went off also. I had no more sense of God or his judgments, much less of the present affliction of my circumstances being from his hand, than if I had been in the most prosperous condition of life.

But now when I began to be sick, and a leisurely view of the miseries of death came to place itself before me; when my spirits began to sink under the burden of a strong distemper, and nature was exhausted with the violence of the fever; conscience that had slept so long, began to awake, and I began to reproach myself with my past life, in which I had so evidently, by uncommon wickedness, provoked the justice of

95 God to lay me under uncommon strokes, and to deal with me in
vindicative a manner.

These reflections oppressed me for the second or third day of my
distemper, and in the violence, as well of the fever, as of the dreadful
reproaches of my conscience, extorted some words from me, like praying
to God, though I cannot say they were either a prayer attended with
desires or with hopes; it was rather the voice of mere fright and distress,
my thoughts were confused, the convictions great upon my mind, and
the horror of dying in such a miserable condition raised vapours into
my head with the mere apprehensions; and in these hurries of my soul,
I know not what my tongue might express; but it was rather exclamation,
such as, Lord! what a miserable creature am I! If I should be sick, I
shall certainly die for want of help, and what will become of me? then
the tears burst out of my eyes, and I could say no more for a good
while.

110 In this interval, the good advice of my father came to my mind, and
presently his prediction which I mentioned at the beginning of this
story, viz. that if I did take this foolish step,[†] God would not bless me,
and I would have leisure hereafter to reflect upon having neglected his
counsel, when there might be none to assist in my recovery. Now, said
I aloud, my dear father's words are come to pass: God's justice has
overtaken me, and I have none to help or hear me: I rejected the voice
of Providence, which had mercifully put me in a posture or station of
life, wherein I might have been happy and easy; but I would neither
see it myself, or learn to know the blessing of it from my parents; I left
them to mourn over my folly, and now I am left to mourn under the
consequences of it: I refused their help and assistance who would have
lifted me into the world, and would have made every thing easy to me,
and now I have difficulties to struggle with, too great for even nature
itself to support, and no assistance, no help, no comfort, no advice;
then I cried out, *Lord be my help, for I am in great distress.*

125 This was the first prayer, if I may call it so, that I had made for many
years . . .

1719

foolish step going to sea

From MOLL FLANDERS[†] [Temptation]

In this distress I had no assistant, no friend to comfort or advise me,
I sat and cried and tormented myself night and day; wringing my hands,
and sometimes raving like a distracted woman; and indeed I have often
wondered it had not affected my reason, for I had the vapours[‡] to such
a degree, that my understanding was sometimes quite lost in fancies
and imaginations.

5 I lived two years in this dismal condition wasting that little I had,
weeping continually over my dismal circumstances, and as it were only
bleeding to death, without the least hope or prospect of help from God
or man; and now I had cried so long, and so often, that tears were, as
I might say, exhausted, and I began to be desperate, for I grew poor
apace.

10 For a little relief I had put off my house and took lodgings, and as I
was reducing my living so I sold off most of my goods, which put a
little money in my pocket, and I lived near a year upon that, spending
very sparingly, and eking things out to the utmost; but still when I
looked before me, my very heart would sink within me at the inevitable
approach of misery and want: O let none read this part without
seriously reflecting on the circumstances of a desolate state, and how
they would grapple with mere want of friends and want of bread; it
will certainly make them think not of sparing what they have only, but
of looking up to heaven for support, and of the wise man's prayer,
Give me not poverty lest I steal.

25 Let 'em remember that a time of distress is a time of dreadful
temptation, and all the strength to resist is taken away; poverty presses,
the soul is made desperate by distress, and what can be done? It was
one evening, when being brought, as I may say, to the last gasp, I think
I may truly say I was distracted and raving, when prompted by I know
not what spirit, and as it were, doing I did not know what, or why; I
dressed me, for I had still pretty good clothes, and went out: I am very
sure I had no manner of design in my head, when I went out, I neither
knew or considered where to go, or on what business; but as the Devil
carried me out and laid his bait for me, so he brought me to be sure to
the place, for I knew not whither I was going or what I did.

35 Wandering thus about I knew not whither, I passed by an apothecary's
shop in Leadenhall Street,[†] where I saw lie on a stool just before the

Moll Flanders Moll tells of her varying fortunes and marriages; her latest husband has been defrauded and dies vapours hysterical fits Leadenhall Street . . . Billingsgate in the mercantile City area

counter a little bundle wrapped in a white cloth; beyond it, stood a maid servant with her back to it, looking up towards the top of the shop, where the apothecary's apprentice, as I suppose, was standing up on the counter, with his back also to the door, and a candle in his hand looking and reaching up to the upper shelf for something he wanted, so that both were engaged mighty earnestly and nobody else in the shop.

This was the bait; and the Devil who I said laid the snare as readily prompted me, as if he had spoke, for I remember, and shall never forget it, 'twas like a voice spoken to me over my shoulder, take the bundle, be quick; do it this moment; it was no sooner said but I stepped into the shop, and with my back to the wench, as if I had stood up for a cart that was going by, I put my hand behind me and took the bundle, and went off with it, the maid or the fellow not perceiving me, or any one else.

It is impossible to express the horror of my soul all the while I did it: when I went away I had no heart to run, or scarce to mend my pace. I crossed the street indeed, and went down the first turning I came to, and I think it was a street that went through into Fenchurch Street, from thence I crossed and turned through so many ways and turnings that I could never tell which way it was, nor where I went, for I felt not the ground, I stepped on, and the farther I was out of danger, the faster I went, till tired and out of breath, I was forced to sit down on a little bench at a door, and then I began to recover, and found I was got into Thames Street near Billingsgate. I rested me a little and went on, my blood was all in a fire, my heart beat as if I was in a sudden fright; in short, I was under such a surprise that I still knew not whither I was a going, or what to do.

After I had tired myself thus with walking a long way about, and so eagerly, I began to consider and make home to my lodging, where I came about nine a clock at night.

What the bundle was made up for, or on what occasion laid where I found it, I knew not, but when I came to open it I found there was a suit of child-bed linen in it, very good and almost new, the lace very fine; there was a silver porringer[†] of a pint, a small silver mug and six spoons, some other linen, a good smock, and three silk handkerchiefs, and in the mug wrapped up in a paper eighteen shillings and sixpence in money.

All the while I was opening these things I was under such dreadful impressions of fear, and in such terror of mind, though I was perfectly safe, that I cannot express the manner of it; I sat me down and cried most vehemently; 'Lord,' said I, 'what am I now? a thief! why I shall

porringer dish for soup

be taken next time and be carried to Newgate[†] and be tried for my life!' and with that I cried again a long time, and I am sure, as poor as I was, if I had durst for fear, I would certainly have carried the things back again; but that went off after a while: well, I went to bed for that night, but slept little, the horror of the fact was upon my mind, and I knew not what I said or did all night, and all the next day: then I was impatient to hear some news of the loss; and would fain know how it was, whether they were a poor body's goods, or a rich; 'perhaps,' said I, 'it may be some poor widow like me, that had packed up these goods to go and sell them for a little bread for herself and a poor child, and are now starving and breaking their hearts, for want of that little they would have fetched,' and this thought tormented me worse than all the rest, for three or four days time.

But my own distresses silenced all these reflections, and the prospect of my own starving, which grew every day more frightful to me, hardened my heart by degrees; it was then particularly heavy upon my mind, that I had been reformed, and had, as I hoped, repented of all my past wickednesses; that I had lived a sober, grave, retired life for several years, but now I should be driven by the dreadful necessity of my circumstances to the gates of destruction, soul and body; and two or three times I fell upon my knees, praying to God, as well as I could, for deliverance; but I cannot but say my prayers had no hope in them; I knew not what to do, it was all fear without, and dark within; and I reflected on my past life as not sincerely repented of, that heaven was now beginning to punish me on this side the grave, and would make me as miserable as I had been wicked.

Had I gone on here I had perhaps been a true penitent; but I had an evil counsellor within, and he was continually prompting me to relieve myself by the worst means; so one evening he tempted me again by the same wicked impulse that had said, *take that bundle*, to go out again and seek for what might happen.

I went out now by daylight, and wandered about I knew not whither, and in search of I knew not what, when the Devil put a snare in my way of a dreadful nature indeed, and such a one as I have never had before or since; going through Aldersgate Street there was a pretty little child had been at a dancing-school, and was going home, all alone, and my prompter, like a true Devil, set me upon this innocent creature, I talked to it, and it prattled to me again, and I took it by the hand and led it along till I came to a paved alley that goes into Bartholomew Close, and I led it in there; the child said that was not its way home; I said, 'yes, my dear it is, I'll show you the way home;' the child had a

Newgate prison (many minor offences carried the death penalty)

120 little necklace on of gold beads, and I had my eye upon that, and in the
dark of the alley I stooped, pretending to mend the child's clog that
was loose, and took off her necklace and the child never felt it, and so
led the child on again: here, I say, the Devil put me upon killing the
child in the dark alley, that it might not cry; but the very thought
125 frightened me so that I was ready to drop down, but I turned the child
about and bade it go back again, for that was not its way home; the
child said so she would, and I went through into Bartholomew Close,
and then turned round to another passage that goes into Long Lane, so
away into Charterhouse Yard and out into St John's Street, then crossing
130 into Smithfield, went down Chick Lane and into Field Lane to Holborn
Bridge, when mixing with the crowd of people usually passing there, it
was not possible to have been found out; and thus I enterprised my
second sally into the world.

135 The thoughts of this booty put out all the thoughts of the first, and
the reflections I had made were quickly off; poverty, as I have said,
hardened my heart, and my own necessities made me regardless of any
thing: the last affair left no great concern upon me, for as I did the
poor child no harm, I only said to myself, I had given the parents a just
140 reproof for their negligence in leaving the poor little lamb to come
home by itself, and it would teach them to take more care of it another
time.

This string of beads was worth about twelve or fourteen pounds, I
suppose it might have been formerly the mother's, for it was too big
for the child's wear, but that, perhaps, the vanity of the mother to have
145 her child look fine at the dancing-school, had made her let the child
wear it, and no doubt the child had a maid sent to take care of it, but
she, like a careless jade, was taken up perhaps with some fellow that
had met her by the way, and so the poor baby wandered till it fell into
my hands.

150 However, I did the child no harm, I did not so much as fright it, for
I had a great many tender thoughts about me yet, and did nothing but
what, as I may say, mere necessity drove me to.

155 I had a great many adventures after this, but I was young in the
business, and did not know how to manage, otherwise than as the Devil
put things into my head; and indeed he was seldom backward to me;
one adventure I had which was very lucky to me; I was going through
Lombard Street in the dusk of the evening, just by the end of Three
King Court, when on a sudden comes a fellow running by me as swift
as lightning, and throws a bundle that was in his hand just behind me,
160 as I stood up against the corner of the house at the turning into the
alley; just as he threw it in he said, 'God bless you Mistress let it lie
there a little,' and away he runs swift as the wind; after him comes two
more, and immediately a young fellow without his hat, crying 'stop

165 thief,' and after him two or three more; they pursued the two last
fellows so close, that they were forced to drop what they had got, and
one of them was taken into the bargain, the other got off free.

170 I stood stock still all this while till they came back, dragging the poor
fellow they had taken, and lugging the things they had found, extremely
well satisfied that they had recovered the booty, and taken the thief;
and thus they passed by me, for I looked only like one who stood up
while the crowd was gone.

175 Once or twice I asked what was the matter, but the people neglected
answering me, and I was not very importunate; but after the crowd
was wholly passed, I took my opportunity to turn about and take up
what was behind me and walk away: this indeed I did with less
disturbance than I had done formerly, for these things I did not steal,
but they were stolen to my hand: I got safe to my lodgings with this
180 cargo, which was a piece of fine black lustring silk, and a piece of
velvet; the latter was part of a piece of about a 11 yards; the former
was a whole piece of near 50 yards; it seems it was a mercer's shop
that they had rifled; I say rifled, because the goods were so considerable
that they had lost; for the goods that they recovered were pretty many,
and I believe came to about six or seven several pieces of silk: how
185 they came to get so many I could not tell; but as I had only robbed the
thief I made no scruple at taking these goods, and being very glad of
them too. . . .